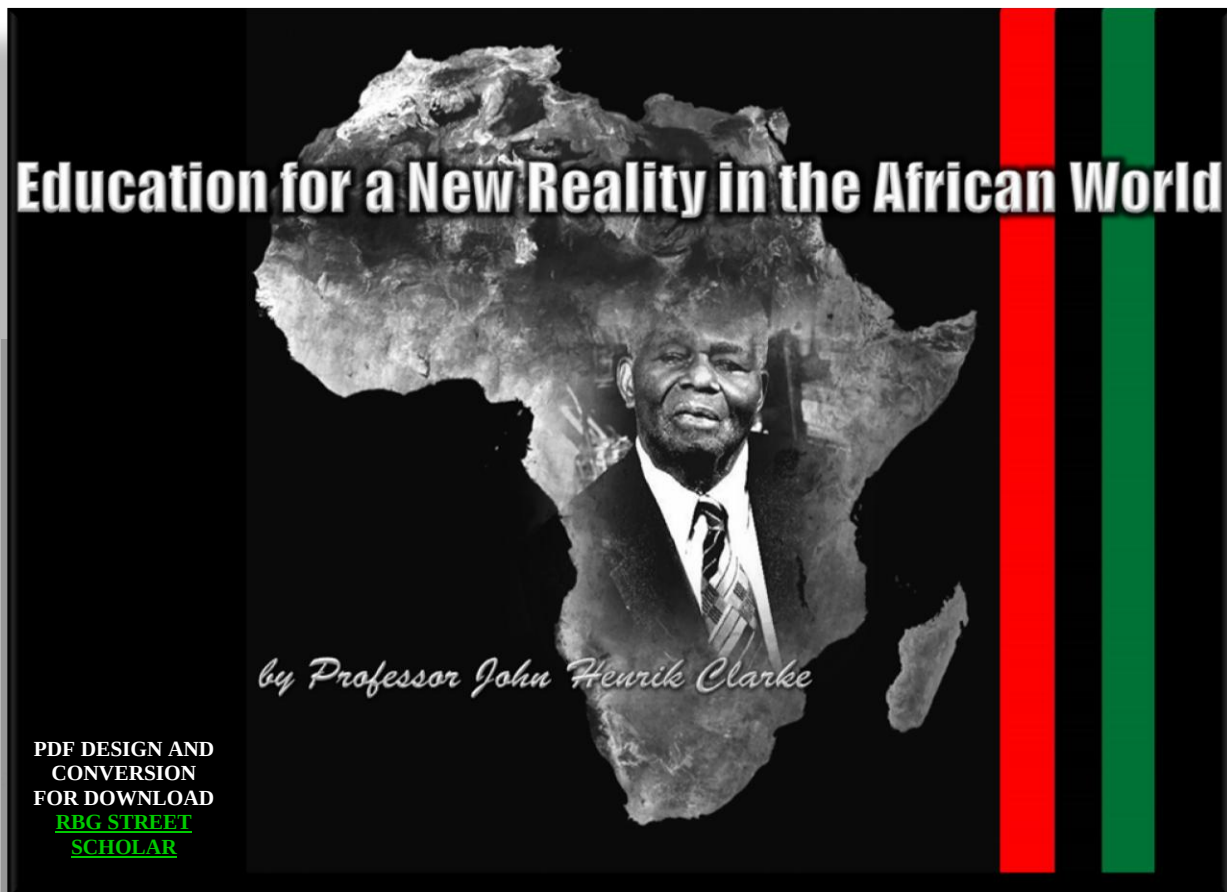




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Education for a New Reality in the African World was prepared for The Phelps-Stokes Fund and delivered on November 14, 1994 in a ceremony at which Dr. Clarke was presented with their highest award, the Aggrey Medal, for "recognition of his unique contribution to our knowledge and understanding of African civilization."

Few scholars and teachers have pursued their field of research and public discourse with more passion and dedication than John Henrik Clarke. Dr. Clarke has sought to win for Africa its "respectful commentary in the history of the world." Although this essay is intended to point to the educational challenge facing people of African descent as they approach the information age of the 21st Century, the discussion Dr. Clarke offers is centered on perceiving more completely the place and contributions of African people to human progress. Fundamentally, what Dr. Clarke argues is that despite the historic denial of Africa's true history in western scholarship, which was used to justify the rape and plunder of the continent and the suppression of African culture through and slavery and colonial oppression, Africa's gift to world society has been unique and permanently enriching. The tragedy is that the truth about Africa's role in human progress has been so effectively suppressed that not even the African world is fully convinced of its reality. This is why the main focus of *Education for a New Reality in the African World* "must have as its mission the restoration of what slavery and colonialism took away."

From the Foreword by Gerald LeMelle, The Phelps-Stokes Fund director of Africa Programs

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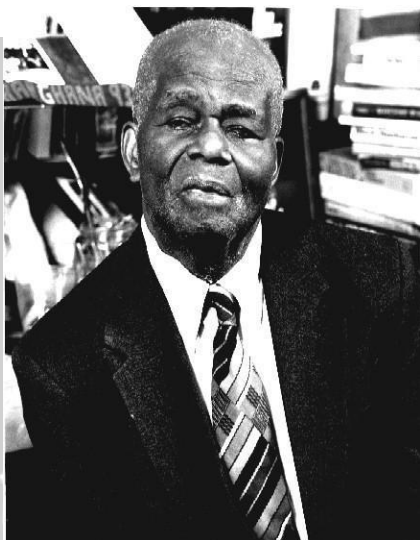
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SOURCE PAGE HOME**LINKS:**

- Part 1 [A Single Focus With Many Dimensions](#)
 Part 2 [The Significance of the African World](#)
 Part 3 [The African Holocaust—The Slave Trade](#)
 Part 4 [African Historiography](#)
 Part 5 [The African World Revolution](#)
 Part 6 [The Rationale for Pan-Africanism](#)
 Part 7 [Washington, DuBois, and Woodson](#)
 Part 8 [The Challenge Facing the Scholar of African Descent](#)
 Part 9 [Education for a New Reality in the African World](#)
 Part 10 [Conclusion](#)

Live TOC

Part 1 of 10.....	3
A Single Focus With Many Dimensions.....	3
Part 2 of 10.....	6
The Significance of the African World	6
Part 3 of 10.....	17
The African Holocaust—The Slave Trade.....	17
Part 4 of 10.....	22
African Historiography	22
Part 5 of 10.....	27
The African World Revolution	27
Part 6 of 10.....	29
The Rationale for Pan-Africanism	29
Part 7 of 10.....	31
Washington, DuBois, and Woodson.....	31
Part 8 of 10.....	36
The Challenge Facing the Scholar of African Descent.....	36
Part 9 of 10.....	40
Education Is Power	40
Part 10 of 10.....	46
Conclusion	46
Struggle is the Highest Form of Education	46
Our Dilemma: The Dream Was Not Dreamed For Us	48

Part 1 of 10**A Single Focus With Many Dimensions**A Single Focus With Many Dimensions

Education for a new reality in the African world must have a single focus with many dimensions that take into consideration the fact that African people are universal and the most dispersed of all ethnic groups. African people can be found in more parts of the world than any other ethnic group. Africa, of course, is their homeland, but through curiosity, need, forced migration and serving as mercenaries in the armies of other nations, Africans have migrated throughout the world and in many ways they relate to all the ethnic nations of the world. To this end I invite you to read three different special issues of the *Journal of African Civilizations*, edited by Professor Ivan Van Sertima, "African Presence In Early Asia," "African Presence In Early

Europe," and "African Presence In Early America," because there is a need to locate African people on the map of human geography and to restore African people to the respectful commentary of history.

If Africans are to be judged by the current headlines in the newspapers the judgment will not be in their favor—with the murder of Africans by Africans in Rwanda, with a nation like Nigeria, which could have been Africa's finest example of a functioning African nation, turning inward on itself, and a nation like Ghana, where Nkrumah took Africa for her political walk in the sun, now a nation of Jesus freaks selling the land, including the gold mines, to foreigners. Without some understanding of how Africa was programmed into this disaster, the picture of Africa, of course, would not be favorable. If one took the time to look beyond the headlines and discover why and how the African dream was turned into an African nightmare one might have some understanding of the African crisis and some human sympathy.

In the years after the emergence of Kwame Nkrumah, 1957-present, Africa was programmed to fall apart. The two generations educated after the independence explosion were educated to imitate Europeans in the handling of power. Figuratively speaking, the European political coat will never fit the African body. Africans were not educated to take over Africa by Africans using African methodology. Nearly every African head of state today has an African body and a European mind. Those trained in the United States have only a variation of the European mind. Because African people the world over are a ceremonial people, they often engage in ceremony and miss the substance. This is why in substance, the civil rights movement was basically a failure,

the Caribbean concept of federation and unity was also a failure, and the Organization of African Unity was the saddest failure of them all. Until we are adult and face the reality of why these failures occurred we will not be prepared to establish an educational program that would enable us to face the reality of the immediate tomorrow of African people.

The main focus of an education for a new reality in the African world must have as its mission the restoration of what slavery and colonialism took away. Slavery and colonialism took from African people their basic culture, their language, their concept of nationhood, their manhood and their womanhood. They mutilated and tried to destroy their traditional culture and reduced Africans to beggars at the cultural and political door of other people while neglecting the job of restoring their own culture, the main thing that could have sustained them.

The Africans needed a value system of their own design. Most important in the education to assume the responsibility of nationhood, Africans needed to be educated to be the managers of the wealth producing resources of their own country. All over the African world we need fewer parades, fewer demonstrations, fewer pronouncements, less hero worship and more closed door meetings to plan the strategy of African survival throughout the world. We need to study how other nations rose from a low to a high position in the world and did what we still have to do.

Both my colleagues and my students have grown weary of my using the case of the rise of modern Japan. They say the Japanese are racists. They are, but they did for themselves what we still need to do—they retained their culture. They did not let the conqueror interfere with their way of life or tamper with the concept and image of god as they conceived god to be. Throughout the whole of the African world most Africans who call themselves civilized, and here I have to question their definition of the term, worship a concept and image of a god assigned to them by a foreigner. Because the Japanese refused to allow their conquerors to do this to them they recovered from defeat and rose to a position in a world where their former conquerors are asking them for space in their commercial world.

The Japanese did this without demonstrations, shooting a gun or asking the permission of their conqueror. They did this because they could talk strategy among themselves and not have anyone run to their conqueror and betray the strategist. They realized something that the people of the African world have not yet realized. There is no way to move any people from a lower to a higher position unless they are willing to accept some form of collective discipline. You can not move an unruly mob into anything but chaos. Sometime we are democratic among ourselves and not able to get anything done because we are not able to decide what needs to be done.

Europeans and white people in general have become masters of image control and mind control, which is sometimes one and the same. The most devastating of all European image control is their control over the definition and the image of God. Very few black ministers or laypersons dispute the white picture of Christ painted in Europe

1500 years after Christ was dead. Most people in the civilizations of the world generally look at a spiritual deity that resembles themselves, mainly the father in their home, be this right or wrong. Why are we an exception?

Let's look briefly at what this image does to our mind and the mind of our youth. The image of Christ, the son of God is one color, policemen are the same, judges in the courts, in most cases, are the same. What are these images saying to our youth—that the color they wear is incapable of holding power. When one goes to the black church and looks at the Sunday school lesson, all the angels shown there are white. These pictures tell your child that he or she is not capable of being an angel.

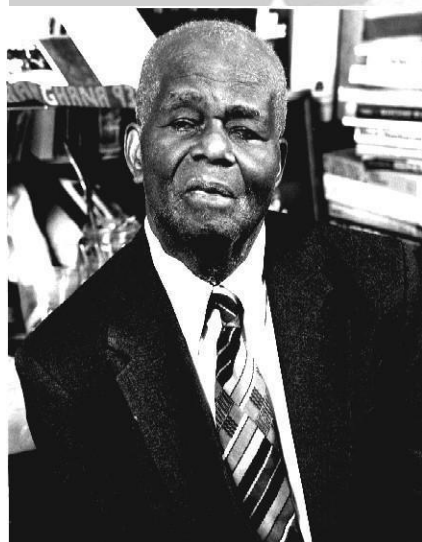
If you are now asking the question, what has this to do with education for a new reality in the African world, then you need to ask the question until you find the answer. Why not answer the question with a question to yourself: Am I not as worthy of exercising power over myself, within my family, within my community, within my nation, as anyone else? If I am not prepared for it, do I have the mental capacity to prepare myself for it? Do people holding power have a mental capacity in excess of mine? If so, why? We live in a society that programs us into doubting our capacity to be the masters of ourselves and the circumstances under which we live. The rulers of this society and other societies have made a mystery of the ruling of nations. They say outright, or imply, that this is an achievement beyond our capacity.

If we had a thorough knowledge of our history for just one thousand years before the slave trade, we could put this matter to rest. There were great independent states along the coast of East Africa before they were destroyed by the Arab slave trade. There were great independent states in the Congo before they were destroyed in 1884. There were great independent states in inner West Africa that lasted one hundred fifty years into the slave trade period. One independent state, Songhay, ruled exceptionally well by Africans, conducted trade in the Mediterranean and in southern Europe, had a great university, Sankore, at Timbuctoo and a university city devoted mainly to education. While the ruling family was of the Islamic faith, this was not an Arab achievement; there were no Arab teachers at the University of Sankore or Jenne.

This is why throughout this paper I will be consistently referring to the fact that we have to look back in order to look forward. The past illuminates the present and the present will give us some indication of what the future can be. Education for a new reality in the African world has to be three dimensional in its approach.

Part 2 of 10

The Significance of the African World



The Significance of the African World

A distinguished African American poet, Countee Cullen, began his poem "Heritage" with the question: "What is Africa to me?" In order to understand Africa, we must extend the question by asking, "What is Africa to the Africans?" and "What is Africa to the world?" With these questions we will be calling attention to the need for a total reexamination of African history. Considering the old approaches to African history and the distortions and confusion that resulted from these approaches, a new approach to African history must begin with a new frame of reference which will help us better analyze the issues of slavery, colonialism, imperialism and nation-building among black people.

We must be bold enough to reject such terms as "Black Africa" which presupposes that there is a legitimate, "White Africa." We must reject the term "Negro Africa" and the word "Negro" and all that it implies. This word, like the concept of race and racism, grew out of the European slave trade and the colonial system that followed. It is not an African word and it has no legitimate application to African people. For more details on this matter, I recommend that you read the book, *The Word Negro—Its Origin and Evil Use*, by Richard B. Moore. In a speech on "The Significance of African History," the Caribbean writer, Richard B. Moore observed:

The significance of African history is shown, though not overtly, in the very effort to deny anything worthy of the name of history to Africa and the African peoples. This widespread, and well nigh successful endeavor, maintained through some five centuries, to erase African history from the general record, is a fact which of itself should be quite conclusive to thinking and open minds. For it is logical and apparent that no such undertaking would ever have been carried on, and at such length, in order to obscure and bury what is actually of little or no significance.

The prime significance of African history becomes still more manifest when it is realized that this deliberate denial of African history arose out of the European expansion and invasion of Africa which began in the middle of the fifteenth century. The compulsion was thereby felt to attempt to justify such colonialist conquest, domination, enslavement, and plunder. Hence, this brash denial of history and culture to Africa, and

indeed even of human qualities and capacity for 'civilization' to the indigenous people of Africa.

Mr. Moore is saying, in essence, that African history must be looked at anew and seen in its relationship to world history. First, the distortions must be admitted. The hard fact is that most of what we now call world history is only the history of the first and second rise of Europe. The Europeans are not yet willing to acknowledge that the world did not wait in darkness for them to bring the light, and that the history of Africa was already old when Europe was born.

Until quite recently, it was rather generally assumed, even among well educated persons in the West, that the continent of Africa was a great expanse of land, mostly jungle, inhabited by savages and fierce beasts. It was not thought of as an area where great civilizations could have existed or where the great kings of these civilizations could have ruled in might and wisdom over vast empires. It is true that there are some current notions about the cultural achievements of Egypt, but Egypt was perceived of as European land rather than a country of Africa. Even if a look at an atlas or globe showed Egypt to be in Africa, the popular thought immediately saw in the Sahara Desert a formidable barrier and convenient division of Africa into two parts: one (north of the Sahara) was inhabited by European-like people of high culture and noble history; the other (south of the Sahara) was inhabited by dark-skinned people who had no culture, and were incapable of having done anything in their dark and distant past that could be dignified by the designation of "history." Such ideas, of course, are far from the truth, but it is not difficult to understand why they persisted, and unfortunately still persist, in one form or another in the popular mind.

To understand how these ideas came about we must examine African history and its relationship to world history before and after the slave trade and the colonial period. Then we must deal with a recurring theme in the African peoples struggle to regain a definition of themselves and their role in world history—Pan-African Nationalism. African people are both jealous and envious of other people who possess a culture container called, nation. They want the same thing for themselves and all African people on the face of the earth. African political activists are asking, and trying to answer the question: "How did we become so scattered and fragmented and how can we unite to save ourselves?" The formula that a large number of African people agree on most is Pan-African Nationalism. This formula bridges all political lines, religious and cultural lines, and geographical boundaries, or should do so.

The following definition of Pan-Africanism and its meaning is extracted from one of my books in preparation, *Pan-Africanism: A Brief History of An Idea in the African World*. "Pan" movements are not new in the world. These movements existed long before the use of the preface "Pan" was a part of a group's organizational name. Any movement by an ethnic group to recover and reclaim their history, culture and national identity, after slavery, war or migration, forced or otherwise, can be called a "Pan" movement.

The largest number of these movements existed in the United States, a nation of immigrants. In this country these movements were mainly historical and cultural societies whose objectives were to preserve the history of the United States and the respective history of each immigrant group.

Pan-Africanism, often thought of as a movement conceived and developed by Africans living outside Africa, was in fact, a world-wide movement, affecting Africans in every part of the world. Generally, we think of it as a twentieth century phenomenon. In fact, this world-wide movement used different approaches, depending on the political climate in the countries where African people lived in large numbers. In Africa itself, Pan-Africanism was often expressed through armed resistance to slavery and colonialism.

There is need for an operational definition that will explain Pan-Africanism's many manifestations in different places, under different circumstances. All over the world, Africans have been fighting to restore what slavery and colonialism took away from them. No matter what their circumstances, their objectives have been the same. Slavery and colonialism strained, but did not completely break, the cultural umbilical cord between the Africans in Africa and those who, by forced migration, now live in what is called the Western World. A small group of African American and Caribbean writers, teachers and preachers, collectively developed the basis of what would be an African-consciousness movement over one hundred years ago. Their concern was with Africa in general and Egypt and Ethiopia, and what we now called the Nile Valley, in particular.

In the years before emancipation of the slaves in the United States and in the Caribbean Islands, these "free" blacks had barely mastered their conqueror's language. However, in spite of their lack of formal training, their first writings reflected a concern for Africa as their homeland. [W.E.B. DuBois](#), the great African American scholar, and elder statesman among African Americans, describes the situation in this manner:

From the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries, the Africans imported to America regarded themselves as temporary settlers destined to return eventually to Africa. Their increasing revolts against the slave system, which culminated in the eighteenth century, showed a feeling of close kinship to the motherland and even well in the nineteenth century they called their organizations "African" as witness the "African Unions" of New York and Newport, and the African Churches of Philadelphia and New York. In the West Indies and South America there was even closer indication of feelings of kinship with Africa and the East.

In referring to the importance of African people in world history, he tells us that:

Always Africa is giving us something new.. On its black bosom arose one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of self-protecting civilizations, and grew so mightily that it still furnishes superlatives to thinking and speaking men. Out of its dark and more remote forest vastnesses came, if we may credit many recent scientists, the first welding of iron, and we know that agriculture and trade flourished there when Europe was a wilderness.

He notes further that:

Nearly every human empire that has arisen in the world, material and spiritual, has found some of its greatest crises on the continent of Africa. It was through Africa that Christianity became the religion of the world. In Africa, the last flood of Germanic invasions spent itself within hearing distance of the last gasp of Byzantium, and it was again through Africa that Islam came to play its great role of conqueror and civilizer.

Egypt and the nations of the Nile Valley were, figuratively, the beating heart of Africa and the incubator for its greatness for more than a thousand years. The human traffic from the South renewed the creative energy of Egypt and helped it meet one of the greatest challenges in history. She gave birth to what later became known as Western Civilization, long before the greatness of Greece and Rome.

In essence, Pan-Africanism is about the restoration of African people to their proper place in world history. The Arab slave trade in East Africa (that started before the trans-Atlantic slave trade in West Africa) shattered the foundations of African nations and cultures. These catastrophes would scatter African people to the four corners of the earth. Further, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Europeans began to colonize most of the world: they not only colonized the world but they colonized information about the world. And in order to create a rationale for the Atlantic slave trade, Africans were left out of the respectful commentary of history.

The objective of Pan-Africanism is not only the restoration of land and nationhood: it has as one of its aims the restoration of respect. The major PanAfricanist theoreticians—W.E.B. DuBois, H. Sylvester Williams, C.L.R. James and George Padmore—gave the concept form and substance. This concept was old before they were born. The main roots of Pan-Africanism (both action and social thought) were nourished by the events of the fifteenth century—the second rise of Europe, the beginning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and Western colonialism. During the period referred to here, Africans lost their nation-structure, war was declared on their culture, both by the European and the Arab and the African was removed from the commentary of world history.

The three major religions of that day, Judaism, Christianity and Islam found a rationale for slavery that they could live with. Slavery was practiced and the Africans were scattered throughout the world as though they were a people outside of the grace of God. Because Africans lost more than any other people in human history have lost, they have more to restore than any other people. Although some things will never be restored. In the Arab slave trade, that started before the rise of Islam, and the European slave trade, that started in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the colonialism that followed, Africa has suffered through more than five hundred years of foreign domination.

These Europeans and Arabs impressed upon the African mind the fact that Africans could not manage nations. Most Africans in Africa and throughout the world do not know enough about their history to know that they managed nations, exceptionally well, for

thousands of years, before the first European wore a shoe or lived in a house that had a window.

Education for a new reality in the African world will have to begin with a total view of the role of Africans in world history and their interaction with societies, nations and cultures down through the ages. It is generally conceded in most scholarly circles that mankind originated in Africa; this makes the African man the father and the African woman the mother of mankind. This is where we begin our assessment of the role of Africa and its people in world history.

Early men in Africa became geniuses at surviving under harsh circumstances. Present-day archaeologists have dug up and preserved the evidence of their achievements. They found that they made hooks to catch fish, spears to hunt with, stone knives to cut with, the bola with which to catch birds and animals, the blow-gun, the hammer and the stone axe. In his pamphlet, "The African Contribution," the writer John W. Weatherwax gives us this additional evidence: today's cannon, long-range missiles, ship propellers, automatic hammers, gas engines, and even meat cleavers and upholstery tack hammers have the roots of their development in the early African use of power. Africans gave mankind the first machine; it was the fire stick. It is the making of tools that sets man apart from, and in a sense, above all living creatures. Africans started mankind along the tool-making path. Canoes made it possible for man to travel farther and farther away from his original home. They began to explore the many rivers in Africa like the Nile, the Congo and the Niger. It was in this way that the early peopling of Africa started and that organized societies began. At some time years later, Africans, driven by curiosity or some force of nature, began to leave Africa in large numbers. They became the most widely dispersed of all people. Evidence of their presence, at some time in history, has been found in nearly every part of the world. Africa was already old when what we now call Europe was born. The Ghanaian historian, Joseph B. Danquah, called attention to this fact in his Introduction to the book, *United West Africa or Africa at the Bar of the Family of Nations*, when he said:

By the time Alexander the Great was sweeping the civilized world with conquest after conquest from Chaeronia to Gaza, from Babylon to Cabul, by the time this first of the Aryan conquerors was learning the rudiments of war and government at the feet of philosophic Aristotle; and by the time Athens was laying down the foundations of modern European civilization, the earliest and greatest Ethiopian culture had already flourished and dominated the civilized world for over four and a half centuries. Imperial Ethiopia had conquered Egypt and founded the XXVth Dynasty, and for a century and a half the central seat of civilization in the known world was held by the ancestors of the modern Negro, maintaining and defending it against the Assyrian and Persian Empires of the East. Thus, at the time when Ethiopia was leading the civilized world in culture and conquest, East was East but West was as yet to be held. Rome was nowhere to be seen on the map, and sixteen centuries were to pass before Charlemagne would rule in Europe and Egbert becomes first king of England. Even then, history was to drag on for another seven hundred years before Roman Catholic Europe could see fit to end the

Great Schism, soon to be followed by the disturbing news of the discovery of America and by the fateful rebirth of the youngest of world civilizations.

The French writer, Count C.F. Volney in his book, *Ruins of Empires*, made a similar statement after observing the evidence of what was once a great Ethiopian Empire. This was his observation:

A people now forgotten discovered, while others were yet barbarians, the elements of the arts and sciences. A race of men now rejected for their sable skin and frizzled hair founded, on the study of the laws of nature, those civil and religious systems which still govern the universe.

The present search for the place of African people in world history and the Black Power Revolution that produced the Black and Beautiful concept out of which the Black Studies Revolution emerged, is part of a chain reaction to the absence of African people from the accepted commentaries of world history. This also means that we, as an African people, rejected the rejection referred to in Count Volney's observations, and we are now demanding that other people acknowledge our contribution to world history, and their indebtedness to us.

It can be said with a strong degree of certainty that Africa has had three Golden Ages. The first two reached their climax and were in decline before Europe as a functioning entity in human society was born. Africa's first Golden Age began at the beginning—with the birth of man and the development of organized societies.

In his book, *The Progress and Evolution of Man in Africa* Dr. L.S. B. Leaky states, "In every country that one visits and where one is drawn into a conversation about Africa, the question is regularly asked, by people who should know better: 'But what has Africa contributed to world progress?' The critics of Africa forget that men of science today, with few exceptions, are satisfied that Africa was the birthplace of man himself, and that for many hundreds of centuries thereafter, Africa was in the forefront of all human progress."

In the early development of man, the family was the most important unit in existence. Through the years the importance of this unit has not changed. The first human societies were developed for reasons relating to the needs and survival of the family. The early African had to make implements with which to catch fish and animals for the family table. He searched for new ways of building shelter, gathering and raising food, and domesticating animals. Our use of fire today simply continues the process started by the early Africans—the control of fire.

With the discovery of metals and how to use them, all Africa took a great leap forward. Man had learned how to take iron from the ground and turn it into spears and tools. Iron cultures spread rapidly across Africa and there were very few parts of Africa that were not influenced by these iron age cultures. Iron cultures had their greatest development in the area of Africa that is now the Eastern Sudan, in the great city-state of Meroe. The

use of iron accelerated every aspect of African development and introduced a new danger—the eventual use of iron weapons in warfare.

The Nile River became a great cultural highway, bringing peoples and culture out of inner Africa. These migrations by river led to the establishment of one of the greatest nations in world history, Egypt. In his book, *The Destruction of African Civilization, Great Issues of A Race From 4500 B.C. to 2000 A.D.*, the African American historian, [Chancellor Williams](#), refers to Egypt as "Ethiopia's Oldest Daughter" and calls attention to evidence to prove the southern African origin of early Egyptian people and their civilization.

Egypt first became an organized nation about 6000 B.C. Medical interest centers upon a period in the Third Dynasty (5345–6307 B.C.) when Egypt had an ambitious pharaoh named Zoser, and Zoser, in turn, had for his chief counselor and minister a brilliant commoner named Imhotep whose name means "He who cometh in peace." Imhotep constructed the famous step pyramid of Sakkarah, near Memphis. The building methods used in the construction of this pyramid revolutionized the architecture of the ancient world. Egypt gave the world some of the greatest personalities in the history of mankind. In this regard, Imhotep is singularly outstanding. In the ancient history of Egypt, no individual left a deeper impression than the commoner Imhotep. He was the world's first multi-genius. He was also the real father of medicine. In his book, *Evolution Of Modern Medicine* Sir William Osler refers to Imhotep as "the first figure of a physician, to stand out clearly from the mists of antiquity."

The period in Egyptian history from the Third Dynasty to the first invasion of Egypt by the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, in 1700 B.C. is, in my opinion, the apex of the first Golden Age. The western Asian domination over Egypt lasted about one hundred and twenty years and was ended by the rise of Egyptian nationalism during the Seventeenth Dynasty. During this period the pharaohs at Thebes consolidated their powers and began a united campaign to rid lower Egypt of the Hyksos invaders. When the invaders from western Asia were finally driven out by the Pharaoh Ahmose I, the splendid Eighteenth Dynasty was established and Egypt's second Golden Age began. Egypt's Golden Age did not belong to Egypt alone but included other nations in Africa, mainly Kush and Ethiopia (which at certain periods in history were one and the same). These nations farther to the south were the originators of the early culture of Egypt. Egypt at this juncture in history was no longer dependent on her cultural parent and was once more the most developed nation in the world.

Again rulers of monumental status were coming to power. Two of the best known rulers of this period were the female pharaoh Hatshepsut and her brother Thothmose III. Great temples were built throughout the country, and the consequent employment of hundreds of artists and craftsmen prepared the way for the artistic glories which were still to come.

During the reign of Thothmose II, the influence of Egypt was once more extended to western Asia, now referred to as the Middle East. The age of grandeur continued. This

age underwent a dramatic and lasting change in 1386 B.C. Around that time, Queen Tiye of Egypt gave birth to a boy who was first named Amenhotep after his father. Very little is known of his childhood except that he was sickly from birth and developed an interest in art, poetry, and religion. His closest companion was said to be Nefertiti, who later became his wife.

Akhenaten, often referred to as the "Heretic King," is one of history's most extraordinary monarchs. Thirteen hundred years before Christ he preached and lived a gospel of love, brotherhood, and truth. He has been called the world's first idealist; the first temporal ruler ever to lead his people toward the worship of a single God.

When Akhenaten came to the throne more than 3000 years ago, Egypt dominated the world.

Egypt's Golden Age gradually waned and the pride and splendor that had marked the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties gave way to internal strife and confusion. Wars of conquest and colonization had drained much of her military and economic strength. In the meantime, as the nations to the south grew more powerful, they became predatory toward Egypt, which had once been their master.

The nation that is now called Ethiopia came back upon the center stage of history around 960 B.C. It was then represented by a queen who in some books is referred to as Makeda, and in others as Belkis. She is better known to the world as the Queen of Sheba. In his book, *World's Great Men Of Color* J. A. Rogers gives this description: "Out of the mists of three thousand years emerge this beautiful love story of a black queen, who, attracted by the face of a Judean monarch, made a long journey to see him..." In *Ethiopia, A Cultural History*, Sylvia Pankhurst tells the story of this journey: "The history of the queen of the South, who undertook a long and arduous journey to Jerusalem, in order to learn of the wisdom of King Solomon, is deeply cherished in Ethiopia as part of the national heritage, for she is claimed as an Ethiopian Queen, Makeda, 'a woman of splendid beauty,' who introduced the religion and culture of Israel to her own land."

By the tenth and the ninth centuries B.C., Egypt had been weakened by outside attacks and by bitter disputes between its priests and the royal families. This had allowed the Kushites to the south to gain a measure of independence. They now had the confidence to move northward and conquer their former masters. In spite of the war of conquest, these Kushite (or Ethiopian) kings brought Egypt her last age of grandeur and social reform. There is a need to make a serious study of this act of internal African colonization and what it achieved at the end of the Golden Age for the two great nations of Egypt and Kush.

These Kushite kings restored the declining culture and economy of Egypt and took it to unprecedented heights of leadership in the way it cared for its people. Though a colony, Egypt was once more a world power.

The Assyrian invasion of 671 B.C. drove the Kushite forces to the south and began the harshness and misrule that destroyed the grandeur that once was Egypt. Egypt continued to decline while a young nation on the other side of the Mediterranean—Greece—began to gather its power, around 500 B.C. In the year 332 B.C., Alexander the Great, a student of Aristotle, invaded Egypt. This was the first purely European invasion of Africa. The aftermath of this invasion, and the new European interest in dominating the trade of the Mediterranean world, led to the Punic Wars and the invasion by the Romans.

In Egypt a strong and shrewd young girl tried to deal with the plight of her country under the threat of Roman domination. Her name was Cleopatra.

In the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., Roman rule began to lose its hold on North Africa and the Middle East. African genius for state building and for bringing new societies into being was reborn in the Western Sudan (inner West Africa), where the third and last African Golden Age began.

The first of the great empires of the Western Sudan to become known to the outside world was Ghana. It began as a small settlement during the second century of the Christian era. It would later develop into a state with a known history of more than a thousand years. In Europe and in the Arab countries, Ghana was known as the country rich in gold. This was a natural attraction for the Arabs and later the Europeans. The country reached the height of its greatness during the reign of Tenkamenin, one of its greatest kings, who came to power in 1062 A.D. The king lived in a palace of stone and wood which was built to be defended in time of war. The empire was well organized. The political progress and social well-being of its people could be favorably compared to the best kingdoms and empires that prevailed in Europe at this time. The country had a military force of 200,000 men.

In one of a number of holy wars, or Jihads, Ghana was invaded by the Almaravids under the leadership of Abu Beku of the Sosso Empire in 1076 A.D. This conquest brought an end to Ghana's age of prosperity and cultural development. The character of the country was slow to change. Nearly one hundred years later the Arab writer El Idrisi wrote of it as being "the greatest kingdom of the Blacks." In a later account, El Idrisi said: "Ghana...is the most commercial of the Black countries. It is visited by rich merchants from all the surrounding countries and from the extremities of the West."

In 1087 the country regained its independence, without regaining its old strength, state organization and grandeur. The ruins of the Empire of Ghana became the Kingdoms of Diara and Sosso. The provinces of Ghana became a part of the Mali Empire and were later absorbed into the Songhay Empire.

The great drama of state-building, trade and commerce, and power brokerage unfolded at Timbuctoo, queen city of the Western Sudan. Two hundred miles down the Niger from Timbuctoo the competing city of Gao stood. It was founded about the seventh century and was the capital of the large black empire of Songhay.

The famous emperor of Mali, Mansa Musa, stopped at Timbuctoo on his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324. He went in regal splendor with an entourage of 60,000 persons, including 12,000 servants. Five hundred bondsmen, each of whom carried a staff of pure gold and marched in front of the entourage. Two hundred eighty camels bore 2,400 pounds of gold which this African monarch distributed as alms and gifts. Musa returned from Mecca with an architect who designed imposing buildings in Timbuctoo and in other parts of his realm. To the outside world of the late medieval period, the Emperor Mansa Musa was more than an individual. He was Africa. He conquered the Songhay Empire and rebuilt the University of Sankore. He figured, by name, on every map. In his lifetime he became, in person, the symbol of the mystery and of the fabulous wealth of the unknown African continent. He was the most colorful of the black kings of the fourteenth century. He still held this position nearly two centuries after his death.

After the death of Mansa Musa, the empire of Mali declined in importance. Its place was taken by Songhay, whose greatest king was Askia the Great (Mohammed Toure). Askia came to power in 1493, one year after Columbus discovered America. He consolidated the territory conquered by the previous ruler, Sonni All, and built Songhay into the most powerful state in the Western Sudan. His realm, it is said, was larger than all Europe.

The German writer Henry Barth, in his famous work, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, calls Askia the Great, "One of the most brilliant and enlightened administrators of all times." He organized the army of Songhay, improved the system of banking and credit, and made the city-states of Gao, Walata, Timbuctoo, and Jenne into intellectual centers. Timbuctoo, during his reign, was a city of 100,000 people—"People filled to the top," said a chronicler of that time, "with gold and dazzling women."

Askia encouraged scholarship and literature. Students from all over the Moslem world came to Timbuctoo to study grammar, law and surgery at the University of Sankore; scholars came from North Africa and Europe to confer with learned historians and writers of this black empire. A Sudanese literature developed and many books were written. Leo Africanus, who wrote one of the best known works on the Western Sudan, says: "In Timbuctoo there were numerous judges, doctors and clerics, all receiving good salaries from the king. He pays great respect to men of learning. There is a big demand for books in manuscript, imported from Barbary (North Africa). More profit is made from the book trade than from any other line of business."

Askia has been hailed as one of the wisest monarchs of the Middle Ages. Alexander Chamberlain, in his book, *The Contribution of the Negro to Human Civilization*, says of him: "In personal character, in administrative ability, in devotion to the welfare of his subjects. in open-mindedness toward foreign influences, and in wisdom in the adoption of enlightened ideas and institutions from abroad, King Askia was certainly the equal of the average European monarch of the time and superior to many of them."

After the death of Askia the Great in 1538, the Songhay Empire began to lose its strength and control over its vast territory. When the Songhay Empire collapsed after the capture of Timbuctoo and Gao by the Moroccans in 1591, the whole of the Western Sudan was

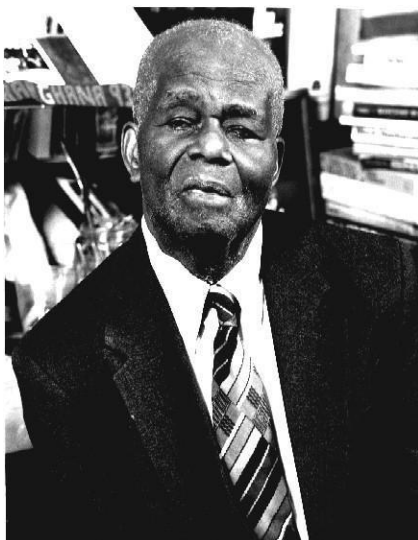
devastated by the invading troops. The Sultan of Morocco, El-Mansur, had sent a large army with European firearms across the Sahara to attack the once powerful empire of Songhay. The prosperous city of Timbuctoo was plundered by the army of freebooters. A state of anarchy prevailed. The University of Sankore which had stood for over five hundred years was destroyed and the faculty exiled to Morocco. The great Sudanese scholar of that day, Ahmed Baba, was among those exiled. Baba was a scholar of great depth and inspiration. He was the author of more than forty books on such diverse themes as theology, astronomy, ethnography and biography. His rich library of sixteen hundred books was lost during his expatriation from Timbuctoo.

Timbuctoo provides the most terrible example of the struggles of the West African states and towns as they strove to preserve what was once their Golden Age. The Arabs, Berbers and Tuaregs from the north showed them no mercy. Timbuctoo had previously been sacked by the Tuaregs as early as 1433, and they had occupied it for thirty years. Between 1591 and 1593, the Tuaregs had already taken advantage of the situation to plunder Timbuctoo once more. Between 1723 and 1728, the Tuaregs once more occupied and looted Timbuctoo. Thus Timbuctoo, once the queen city of the Western Sudan, with more than 200,000 inhabitants, and the center of a powerful state, degenerated into a shadow of its former stature.

Now, West Africa entered a sad period of decline. During the [Moorish](#) occupation, wreck and ruin became the order of the day. When the Europeans arrived in this part of Africa and saw these conditions they assumed that nothing of order and value had existed in these countries. This mistaken impression, too often repeated, has influenced the interpretation of African and African American life and history for over four hundred years.

Africa's time of tragedy and decline started both in Europe and in Africa itself. For more than one thousand years Africans had been bringing into being empire after empire. The opening of Europe's era of exploration, Africa's own internal strife, and the slave trade, turned what had been Africa's Third Golden Age into a time of troubles. The "independence explosion" that started with Ghana in 1957 was a signal to the world that Africans were breaking away from the effects of slavery and colonialism, and were determined to reenter the mainstream of history.

The splendor and the genius in state building that I have been referring to in this short paper is as much a part of African history as slavery, if not more so. In the re-education of African people to take their place in the world of the future, Africans must be clear about the role that they have already played in the world of the past. This is essential if African people are to shape their world of the future.

Part 3 of 10**The African Holocaust—The Slave Trade**The African Holocaust—The Slave Trade

There is a need to look holistically at African history, good and bad. If African people are to be educated to face a new reality on the eve of the twenty first century, we must know about the good times as well as the bad times. We must also know that history has not made Africa and Africans an exceptional case. In the great unfolding of history, Africans have played every role from saint to buffoon and we need to learn how to live with the good as well as the bad. We need to understand the triumphs as well as the tragedies in our history. At the end of what I have been alluding to as the last of the three golden ages in Africa, we entered a period of internal and external tragedy, partly of our making, but mainly imposed on us

by foreigners in search of new land, new energy and new resources. We made the terrible mistake of thinking some foreigners could settle our internal "family" disputes. Instead of settling our family disputes, the foreigner turned us, one against the other, and conquered both. This is the great mistake we made in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries at the end of Africa's third golden age. It is the greatest mistake we are making right now. This mistake grows out of our misinterpretation of our greatest strength which is our universal humanity.

As a people we have always been hospitable to strangers. The weakness in this noble gesture is that we have not been alert enough and suspicious enough to examine the intentions of the stranger that we have invited into our homes. All too often in our history strangers come in as guests and stay as conquerors. This is, at least in part, how and why the slave trade started. You cannot explain the slave trade and vindicate or rationalize the European participation in the slave trade by saying some Africans were in the slave trade and sold slaves to the Europeans. In some instances and in some regions, this was basically true. You cannot excuse the European slave trade by saying that slavery was practiced among the Africans before the Europeans came. In some instances and in some regions, this is also basically true. But the system of internal servitude in Africa that existed in some parts of Africa before the coming of the Europeans and the chattel slavery imposed upon Africa by the Europeans had no direct relationship, one to the other. In the African system of servitude which deserves critical analysis, families were broken up but not a single African was shipped out of Africa. In no way am I trying to say or imply that this system was good. My main point is that it was not the same as the European system. The European slave trade was a three continent industry that brought about a revolution in maritime science, international

trade and a system of mercantilism that had not previously existed in world history. No Africans had this kind of international contact or were in a position to establish it at this juncture in history.

For more enlightenment on this subject, I invite you to read the following books, *Black Mother, The Years of Our African Slave Trade: Precolonial History, 1450–1850*, by Basil Davidson, *Forced Migration*, by Joseph E. Inikore, *Christopher Columbus and The African Holocaust*, by John Henrik Clarke and *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, by Walter Rodney.

Like most world tragedies the Atlantic slave trade, or the European slave trade, started slowly, almost accidentally. At first the Europeans did not visit the coast of West Africa looking for slaves; they were searching for a route to Asia for the spices and the sweets they had heard about because they needed something to supplement the dull European food of that day. In general they needed new energy, new land and new resources. Plagues, famines and internal wars had left Europe partly exhausted and partly underpopulated. In the years between the first European entry into West Africa from about 1438 to the year of Christopher Columbus' alleged discovery of America in 1492, there were no slaves of consequence taken out of Africa because there was no special work outside of Africa for slaves to do. The creation of the plantation system in the Americas and the Caribbean Islands set in motion a way of life for Europeans that they had not previously enjoyed. This way of life and the exploitation of the resources of the Americas and the Caribbean Islands, after the destruction of the nations and civilizations of the people referred to as "Indians," renewed the economic energy of Europe and gave Europeans the ability to move to the center stage of what they refer to as world progress. This was done mainly at the expense of African people who are still not thoroughly aware of their impact on every aspect of world history. Education for a new reality in the African world, must train African people to understand the nature of their contribution to the different aspects of world history, past and present, and the possibilities of their future contribution.

If slavery was the African people's holocaust, we should not be ashamed of saying so. We should have no hesitation in using the word "holocaust" because no one people has a monopoly on the word and I know of no law that gives a people the right to copyright a word as though it is their exclusive ownership. In relationship to this subject I have previously said that slavery was already an old institution before the European slave trade. However, the European slave trade in Africa is the best known and best recorded in the history of the world and also, in my opinion, the most tragic. The neglected tragedy of this system is that it did not have to occur at all. Had the European entered into a genuine partnership with the Africans instead of reducing them to slaves there would have been more goods and services to be had, both for the Europeans and the Africans, through contract labor.

The European slave trade in Africa was started and reached its crescendo between 1400 to 1600. This was also a turning point in the history of the world. Europe was emerging from the lethargy of the Middle Ages. Europeans were regaining their

confidence, manifesting a new form of nationalism and extending that nationalism into racism. The African had goods and services that the European needed, and the European had the basic technology that the African needed. Had the African needs and the European needs been considered on an equal basis, there could have been an honest exchange between African and European and the European could still have had labor in large numbers without the slave trade and the massive murder that occurred in the slave trade. This idea, only a dream in the minds of a few men, could have changed the world for the better had it been seriously considered.

Slavery is taught as though it is something that victimized only African people. Slavery is an old institution. It is as old as human need and greed. It grew out of a weakness in the human character and the need to cover-up that weakness by dominating other people. In teaching about slavery, the one thing African people seem not to know is that for most of their existence on this earth they have been a sovereign people, free of slavery. The period of their enslavement is the best known and the best documented in history in comparison to other slave periods in history. When other people were the victims it was comparatively short. Feudalism in Europe, a form of European enslavement of Europeans, no matter what you call it, lasted much longer. This is why a holistic view of history is needed in order to understand this particular part of history that relates to a single people. This is where so-called Black Studies Programs missed both the objective and the subject in the study of slavery.

In evaluating the African slave trade, there was another "Middle Passage" often neglected by most scholars—the Arab slave trade. It is often forgotten that the Arab slave trade in East Africa and the slave trade from North Africa into Inner West Africa was protracted and ruthless. Sometimes the Arabs from the north who were Moslem enslaved Africans in the south who were also Moslems, thereby violating one of the most basic customs of their faith—that no Moslem should enslave another Moslem. There is a small library of books on this subject that most scholars have chosen not to read, thereby making the Arab slave trade the best kept secret in history—although it is not a secret at all. Of the many books and documents that I have read on the subject, *Slavery in the Arab World* by Murray Gordon, 1987, and *The African Slave Trade From the 15th to the 19th Century*, in *The General History of Africa: Studies and Documents 2*, UNESCO, 1979. I find the most informative the UNESCO book, especially the chapter, "The Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean."

Like most strangers to Africa the Arabs entered Africa, allegedly, as friends. The Africans who are curious and uncritical about new people, new religions and cultures treated the Arabs as well as they treated other strangers. The Arabs were not always kind in their spread of Islam in Africa. In fact, they were usually ruthless and often disrespectful of societies and cultures that existed in Africa before they arrived. In North Africa the two wars of Arab conquest that came in the seventh and tenth centuries, the first being religious and military, broke the back of Roman influence in the area and replaced the corrupt Roman regimes. At first the Arabs were welcomed in North Africa as a replacement for the ruthless Romans. When the North Africans and Berbers

discovered that the Arabs were also ruthless, although in a different way, it was too late because the Arabs now had the military upper hand.

Another aspect of Arab conquest, generally neglected, is the spread of Arab influence in East Africa through accommodation and sexual conquest. Many times the Arabs moved down the coast of East Africa rendering the service of the much needed East African coastal trade. Soon after this, Arabs began to marry or cohabit with African women. This in turn resulted in a generation of African-looking Arabs. These Arab half-breeds facilitated the spread of the trade inland at a time when the Arab face was held in suspicion in this part of Africa. In the fierce competition in the West African slave trade, the Portuguese were driven from West Africa around to East Africa. The Arab slave trade, moving from north to east met the Portuguese slave trade moving up from the south. These two slave trades complemented each other and culminated with the establishment of one of the largest slave trading forts, in the history of the world, on the Island of Zanzibar. This event is well documented in any good history of East Africa, including the Cambridge History of East Africa, and The Cambridge History of Africa. Basil Davidson's *A History of East and Central Africa to the late 19th Century*, and certain chapters on East Africa in his *Lost Cities of Africa* is a popularization of the subject. There are two old but valuable books on the subject, *East Africa and Its Invaders* by Reginald Coupland, and the chapters on East Africa in the book, *The Colonization of Africa by Alien Races*, by Sir Harry Johnston.

While the East African drama of slavery was unfolding with the Arabs and later with the Portuguese as the protagonists, the larger drama in West Africa was changing the course of history. The Africans, all along the coast of West Africa were being subjected to a form of humiliation never before known, in quite the same way, in their history or human history. The collecting of Africans, sometimes prisoners of war from other Africans, the movement of Africans from the hinterlands to the coast, where very often seven out of ten lost their lives, were forms of unrecorded genocide. This is one of the numerous missing statistics in the attempt to estimate the number of Africans who died in the slave trade within Africa, the number of those who died in the slave dungeons waiting for shipment to the Americas, and the number of those who died on the journey to the Americas. The precise figures will never be known. Good estimations in this case are the best that we have.

There are a number of books describing the tragic living conditions in the slave forts and dungeons along the coast of West Africa. Books written by Europeans tend to tone down the tragedy. Books written by African scholars tend to be academic and objective to the point of being noncommittal to the tragedy of slavery. The following is a brief description of some of the conditions in these slave dungeons. In the early slave trade the forts sometimes contained between three hundred to five hundred captives. During the eighteenth century most forts had been adapted to the larger scale slave trade and they held many hundreds more. There were sections for the female captives and sections for the male captives. There were smaller and more tortuous dungeons for the rebellious and unruly captives. The conditions within and around these slave holding castles were great tragic horror stories. Within the castles there were no beds, no

drinking water, no installed toilet facilities, and no means of day by day sanitary maintenance. The apartments of the slave traders and captains were directly above the main holding dungeons. And they lived there in luxury and were unmindful of the misery and degradation one or two floors below.

These conditions were forced upon a people who had never done European people any harm or had ever allied themselves with the enemies of the Europeans in any way. The Europeans who forced this condition upon African people professed to believe in a loving God who was no respecter of kith, kin and geographical boundaries in the dispensing of his mercy and understanding to all human beings. In their action toward the Africans that would last for more than three hundred years, the Europeans were saying that Africans had no soul or humanity, no culture or civilization worthy of respect, and that they were outside of the grace of God.

The long journey across the sea was another tragic story of misery. Figuratively, the slave ship was a floating city of prisoners presided over by a crew of ruffians gathered from the human scum of Europe. The period of the European slave trade in Africa is best known to us because it is the best-documented. However, the documentation is often confusing because it was created by people who were trying to justify the slave trade. Most people, especially Europeans who created most of the documents on the slave trade, write about the subject with the intent to make the victim of slavery feel guilty and to vindicate the perpetrators of this inhuman trade.

There is probably more dishonesty related to the interpretation of this subject than any other subject known to mankind. The African slave trade, like African history, is often written about, but rarely if ever understood. This misunderstanding probably grows out of the fact that we nearly always start the study of the African slave trade in the wrong place. The germ, the motive, the rationale for the European aspect of the African slave trade started in the minds of the Europeans in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. And this slave trade could not have started at all had there been no market for it. The slave trade started when the Europeans began to expand into the broader world. And the market for slaves was created by Europeans for European reasons. The story of the European slave trade in Africa is essentially the story of the consequences of the second rise of Europe.

The peopling of the so-called new world by African people in the Americas and the Caribbean Islands was an enterprise of monumental proportions. This act would change the status of Europe and the world forever, and the Africans brought to the new world would be transformed into a new kind of people, neither wholly African nor wholly American. They would not easily adapt to their new condition though they gave their slave master, in some cases, the impression that they were doing so. They did not easily give up their African way of life, in spite of the attempt to destroy and outlaw it. This was the basis of massive slave revolts throughout the Caribbean Islands, South America, especially Brazil, and the more than two hundred and fifty slave revolts recorded in the United States.

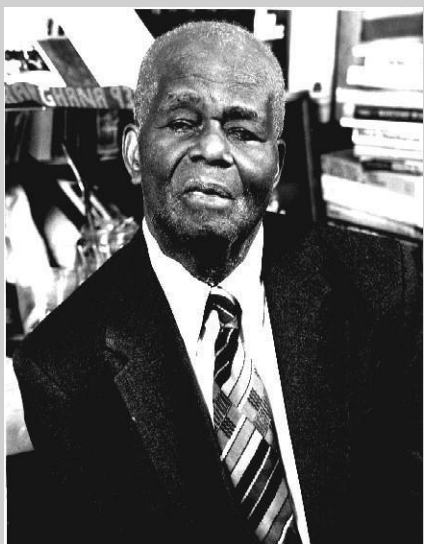
Every attempt was made through the church and through oppression to deny that Africans hid a revolutionary heritage. There is documentary proof that Africans fought on the shores of Africa to keep from getting on the slave ships. After being forced on the slave ships they continued the fight. Some fought to keep from being taken off the slave ships. Many, many more continued the fight once they got here. In parts of South America, and on some islands in the Caribbean where the slaves outnumbered the Europeans, some Africans bypassed the auction block, fled into the hills and the forests and never became slaves at all. Some of these Africans who escaped slavery were called Maroons. The best books on the subject are, *The Maroons*, by Mavis Campbell, *Maroon Societies*, by Richard Price, and *The Haitian Maroons*, and *Black Jacobins* by C.L.R. James.

The drama of African survival in what is called the new world went beyond drama itself. In conditions that defied human imagination, for a protracted period lasting over three hundred years, Africans, using various techniques, pretenses, and acts of both submission and rebellion, went beyond survival and prevailed in order to live and still be a people in spite of the massive effort to destroy every aspect of their humanity. Part of what kept them alive, away from home, is that they would not give up their African culture in spite of being consistently pressured to do so. Many Africans, away from home, depending on the prevailing conditions that could change any day or any moment, had to become two persons in a single body. Some went beyond schizophrenia and changed their personality to suit the prevailing situation in order to survive so that the next generation could prevail.

Part 4 of 10

African Historiography

African Historiography



Joel A. Rogers, a Jamaican scholar, whose work in the field of African world biography is still not appreciated as well as it should be by blacks, is comparatively unknown by whites. The following quote is from my Introduction to the re-publication of his book, *World's Great Men of Color* Vols. I & II:

"J. A. Rogers devoted at least fifty years of his life to researching great black personalities and the roles they played in the development of nations, civilizations, and cultures. This book is his greatest achievement. In his lifetime his books did not reach a large popular reading audience. All of them were privately printed and circulated mainly in the black communities; he died, unfortunately,

on the eve of the "Black Studies Revolution." Mr. Rogers had already delivered what some of the radical black students were demanding. He had looked at the history of people of African origin, and had showed how their history is an inseparable part of the history of mankind.

J. A. Rogers started his research at a time when a large number of black people had some doubts about their contribution to human history. In books like, *Blacks in Antiquity* by Frank M. Snowden, Jr. (1970), *The African Genius* by Basil Davidson (1969), *The Prehistory of Africa* by Desmond Clarke (1970), *Topics in West African History*, by A. Adu Boahen (1967), *Introduction to African Civilizations*, by [John G. Jackson](#) (1970), and *Great Civilizations of Ancient Africa*, by Lester Brooks (1971) these doubts are put to rest.

Europeans have long been in contact with Africa, that is, Northern Africa. The names of [Aesop](#) and Memnon, of Terence and Cleopatra are the names of Africans who have figured in legend and the literature, the arts and history of Greece and Rome. Indeed, the land of Africa was a land of wonder for the ancient Greeks and Romans, and this, to such an extent, that among them it was a proverb that out of Africa there is always something new. The concept of "darkest Africa" refers to the comparative ignorance of Europeans regarding that continent and its people over the last four centuries. An English writer, Jonathan Swift, made a sharp but witty comment on his fellow Europeans' lack of knowledge of Africa when he wrote:



Geographers in Africa maps
With savage pictures fill their gaps,
And o'er uninhabitable downs
Paint elephants instead of towns.

There is another reason why the people of Africa, with the notable exclusion of Egypt, were depicted as uncivilized and lacking in cultural attainments. A number of pious people in Europe would have been struck with horror if they knew of the cruel and bloody acts of their countrymen in the course of the inhuman slave trade. Ruthless European adventurers promoted the hunting down of men, women and children like beasts, and the destruction of complete villages in order to capture the inhabitants and sell them like cattle. Therefore, slave traders would invent fantastic tales of savagery about the Africans so that their capture and transportation to labor on the plantations of the Americas would appear to be acts of Christian concern and high-minded enlightenment.

In the books of J.A. Rogers an attempt was made "to locate Africa's proper place on the maps of human geography. That is what his life and research was about." Rogers came from a large family of African researchers, away from home, searching for the proper place of African people in world history. Almost two hundred years before Ivan Van Sertima, wrote his book of inquiry. *They Came Before Columbus*, black scholars, mostly informally trained, suspected that African people were part of the new world before the arrival of Columbus and they were searching out documents and evidence to prove their

point. Some of these black scholars were drawing upon evidence from artifacts noted in their travels, some from research and some from Leo Weiner's three volume work, *Africa and the Discovery of America*. Because the greatest assault on African history and African personalities was made in the United States, many scholars born in the Caribbean did their best research and wrote their books while residing in the United States. They were joining African American scholars, writers, and teachers in an attempt to answer the question: Why Africana or African world history in the first place? The following is my own explanation.

Africa and its people are the most written about and the least understood of all of the world's people. This condition started in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the beginning of the slave trade and the system of colonialism. The Europeans not only colonized most of the world, they began to colonize information about the world and its people. In order to do this, they had to forget or pretend to forget, all they had previously known about the Africans. Europeans were not meeting Africans for the first time; there had been another meeting during Greek and Roman times.

The African, Clitus Niger, King of Bactria, was also a Cavalry Commander for Alexander the Great. Most of the Greeks' thinking was influenced by this contact with the Africans. The people and the cultures of what is known as Africa are older than the word "Africa." According to most records, old and new, Africans are the oldest people on the face of the earth. The people now called Africans not only influenced the Greeks and the Romans, they influenced the early world before there was a place called "Europe."

When the early Europeans first met Africans, at the crossroads of history, it was a respectful meeting and the Africans were not slaves. Their nations were old before Europe was born. In this period of history, what was to be later known as "Africa" was unknown to the people who would someday be called, "Europeans." Only the people of some of the Mediterranean Islands and a few states of what would become the Greek and Roman states knew of parts of North Africa that was a land of mystery. After the rise and decline of Greek civilization and the Roman destruction of the City of Carthage, they made the conquered territories into a province which they called Africa, a word derived from "Africa" and the name of a group of people about whom very little is known. At first the word applied only to the Roman colonies of North Africa. There was a time when all dark-skinned people were called Ethiopians, for the Greeks referred to Africa as, "The Land of The Burnt-Face People."

Africa, in general, is a manmade mystery, and Egypt, in particular, is an even bigger one. There has long been an attempt on the part of some European "scholars" to deny that Egypt was a part of Africa. To do this they had to ignore the great masterpieces of Egyptian history written by European writers such as, *Ancient Egypt, Light of the World*, Vols. 1&2. and a whole school of European thought that placed Egypt in proper focus in relationship to the rest of Africa.

The distorters of African history also had to ignore the fact that the people of the ancient land which would later be called Egypt, never called their country by that name. They called it, TA-MERRY or KAMPT and sometimes KEMET or SAIS. The ancient Hebrews called it MIZRAIN. Later the Moslem Arabs used the same term but later discarded it. Both the Greeks and the Romans referred to the country as the "Pearl of the Nile." The Greeks gave it the simple name AEGYPTUS. Thus, the word we know as Egypt is of Greek origin.

Until recent times most Western scholars have been reluctant to call attention to the fact that the Nile River is 4,000 miles long. It starts in the south, in the heart of Africa, and flows to the north. It was the world's first cultural highway. Making Egypt a composite of many African cultures. In his article, "The Lost Pharaohs of Nubia," Professor Bruce Williams infers that the nations in the South could be older than Egypt. This information is not new. But when rebel European scholars were saying this one hundred years ago, and proving it, they were not taken seriously.

It is unfortunate that so much of the history of Africa has been written by conquerors, foreigners, missionaries and adventurers. The Egyptians left the best record of their history written by local writers. It was not until near the end of the eighteenth century when a few European scholars learned to decipher their writing that this was understood.

The Greek traveler, Herodotus, was in Africa about 450 B.C. His eyewitness account is still a revelation. He witnessed African civilization in decline and partly in ruins, after many invasions. However, he could still see indications of the greatness that it had been. In this period in history, the Nile Valley civilization of Africa had already brought forth two "Golden Ages" of achievement and had left its mark for all the world to see.

In approaching this subject, I have given preference to writers of African descent who are generally neglected. I maintain that the African is the final authority on Africa. In this regard I have reconsidered the writings of [W.E.B. DuBois](#), George Washington Williams, Drusilla Dungee Houston, [Carter G. Woodson](#), Willis N. Huggins, and his most outstanding student, John G. Jackson. I have also reread the manuscripts of some of the unpublished books of Charles C. Seifert, especially manuscripts of his last completed book, *Who Are The Ethiopians?* Among the Caribbean scholars, like Charles C. Seifert, Joel A. Rogers is the best known and the most prolific. Over fifty years of his life was devoted to documenting the role of African personalities in world history. His two volume work, *World's Great Men of Color* is a pioneer work in the field.

Among the present-day scholars writing about African history, culture and politics, [Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan's](#) books are the most challenging. I have drawn heavily on his research in the preparation of this article. He belongs to the main cultural branch of the African world, having been born in Ethiopia, growing to early manhood in the Caribbean Islands and having lived in the African American community of the United States for

over thirty years. His major books on African history are *Black Man of the Nile and His Family*, *Africa: Mother of Western Civilization*, and *The African Origins of Major "Western Religions."* They tell the African story, and in the distance it is a part of the African American story. It is difficult for depressed African Americans to know that they are a part of the larger story of the history of the world. The history of the modern world was made, in the main, by what was taken from African people. Europeans emerged from what they call their "Middle Ages," people poor, land poor, resource poor, and to a great extent culture poor. They raided and raped the cultures of the world, mostly Africa, and filled their homes and museums with treasures, then they called the people who created these items, primitive. The Europeans did not understand the cultures of non-Western people then; they do not understand them now.

History, I have often said, is a clock that people use to tell their political time of day. It is also a compass that people use to find themselves on the map of human geography. History tells a people where they have been and what they have been. It also tells a people where they are and what they are. Most importantly, history tells a people where they still must go and what they still must be. In his book, *Tom-Tom* the writer, John W. Vandercook, makes this meaningful statement:

A race is like a man
Until it uses its own talents,
takes pride in its own history,
and loves its own memories,
it can never fulfill itself completely.

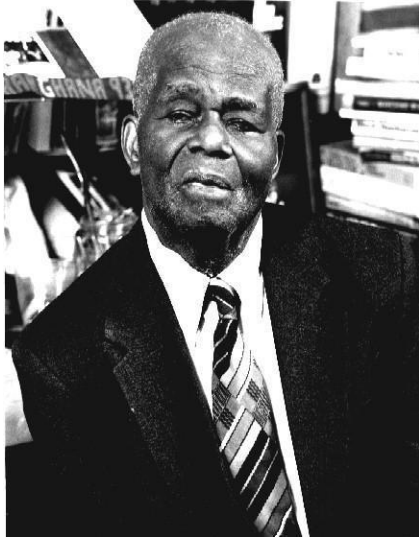
This, in essence, is what African history and what African American history is all about. The phrase African American or African American History Month, taken at face value and without serious thought, appears to be incongruous. Why is there a need for an African American History Month when there is no similar month for the other minority groups in the United States. The history of the United States, in total, consists of the collective histories of minority groups. What we call "American civilization" is no more than the sum of their contributions. The African Americans are the least integrated and the most neglected of these groups in the historical interpretation of the American experience. This neglect has made African American History Month a necessity.

Most of the large ethnic groups in the United States have had, and still have, their historical associations. Some of these associations predate the founding of the Association For The Study of Negro Life and History in 1915. Dr. Charles H. Wesley tells us that, "Historical societies were organized in the United States with the special purpose in view of preserving and maintaining the heritage of the American nation." Within the framework of these historical societies many ethnic groups, black as well as white, engaged in those endeavors that would keep alive their beliefs in themselves and their past as a part of their hopes for the future. For African Americans, Carter G. Woodson led the way and used what was then called, "Negro History Week," to call attention to his people's contribution to every aspect of world history. Dr. Woodson, then Director of the Association For the Study of Negro Life and History, conceived this

special week at a time when public attention should be focused on the achievements of America's citizens of African descent.

Part 5 of 10

The African World Revolution



The African World Revolution

The 1950's marked a new era in African world relationships. The search for change was part of the African American agitation for equal pay for black teachers that was converted into a fight for equal education, which in turn became a part of the fight for equal citizenship rights on every level and laid the foundation for the civil rights movement. When segregated schools were outlawed by the Supreme Court in 1954, the fight against segregation on buses and separate eating facilities had already started. The Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955 and the murder of a black teenager, Emmett Till, later that same year, galvanized and consolidated the various civil rights efforts and made them into a movement of consequence. In the next decade, this movement would receive national and international attention. The fact that this movement rose concurrent with the Caribbean Federation Movement and the African Independence Movement made it a part of an international movement by African people for a place and voice in the political arena of the world. The Africans in Africa were agitating for independence and demanding the fulfillment of promises made to them after World War II. Many Africans who, prior to this war, would have been put to death for lifting their hands against a white person, now were looking at the world from a different vantage point. Some were returning soldiers who had been trained to fight white Europeans, other than their colonial masters. Some returned home with the idea of using their skills to fight against colonial oppression itself. Many missionary-trained Africans began to see the God that the missionaries had trained them to worship as no respecter of color. They began to question their status at home and abroad.

In the education of African people for a new reality, as the people of the African world face the twenty-first century, a history of the rise and fall of these movements is essential. African people throughout the world must be bold enough to ask the questions: What went right with this movement? and, What went wrong? In the final analysis: Who betrayed this movement, and Why? This was a part of an African World Revolution for dynamic social change.

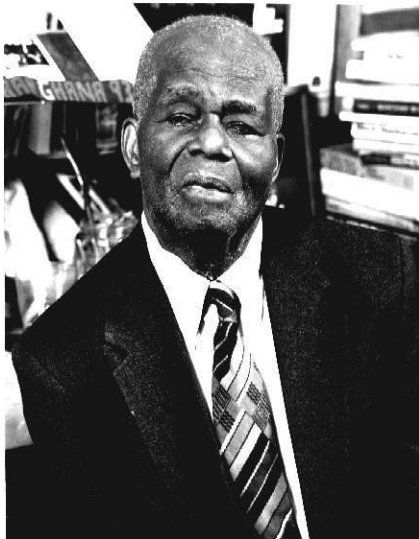
Agitation against colonial rule in Ghana led to the establishment of facsimile political associations that would later be developed into political parties. The main political party in Ghana, the Convention Peoples Party (CPP), under the leadership of [Kwame Nkrumah](#) guided Ghana into independence in 1957. This spectacular action set Africa's political revolution in motion. After 1957 nations in Africa were coming into being almost weekly. By 1958 a conference of nine independent states in Africa was called by Kwame Nkrumah. Some of the ideas that came out of the Pan-African Conference in Manchester, England, in 1945, were becoming realities. A small West African nation, Ghana, under the political leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, began to take all Africa for a political walk in the sun. The African Revolution was born and growing fast. Independence fever swept over Africa and reinforced the aspirations of the Africans living abroad. The new leaders of Africa were men of vision who had challenged the right of foreigners to rule their respective countries. By the mid-1960's coups and counter coups and paid agents of the former colonial powers had frustrated most of the countries in Africa and stymied their promise. In the closing years of the 1980's a generation of Africans, some missionary-trained, some educated abroad, had returned home, more Western than African. To put it crudely, most of these returning Africans were Europeans in black-faces who only superficially had Africa's interest at heart.

What is needed now is a clear agenda of what we must do in the future to save Africa for African people. The Africa of tomorrow will belong to those Africans who are prepared to sacrifice the time and energy to properly handle Africa and all its resources, and to protect Africa internally and externally. The guiding principle for African people, here and abroad, has to be a form of Pan-African Nationalism. Because we have been the victims of imperialism we should never contradict ourselves by becoming imperialistic in our relationship with other people. The following comment on Pan-Africanism is extracted from my book, *Who Betrayed the African World Revolution? and Other Speeches*.

Pan-Africanism and African Nationalism are too often misinterpreted as forms of Black Separatism, a move to organize blacks against whites. I think Pan-Africanism might be understood if we also understood that for the last five hundred years the world has been ruled in the main by white nationalism. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when Europe pulled out of the lethargy of the Middle Ages and began to expand into the broader world, no nation in Europe was against this move. If there was an argument among Europeans at all, it was an argument over the spoils of conquest. Europeans' conquest and dominance over the land and commerce of most of the world was achieved by a form of Pan-Europeanism. Pan-Africanism was created as a means of relieving Africans of the burden of European dominance in order to create, at least symbolically, the concept of "One God, One Aim, One Destiny," as advocated by [Marcus Garvey](#).

Part 6 of 10

The Rationale for Pan-Africanism



A Single Focus With Many Dimensions

Early in this century, Caribbean intellectuals began to produce the concept called Pan-Africanism. This was a new international education whose full dimension few of us understood. The idea of bringing the totality of the African world together as one people, looking at the very essence and existence of African people. The first Pan-African Congress was called in London by H. Sylvester Williams in 1900. W.E.B. DuBois, who would later be referred to as "the Father of Pan-Africanism," was really the intellectual guardian of Pan-Africanism and its finest scholar. In my opinion, the first Pan-African Congress, 1900, and the fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester, England, 1945, were the most significant. The basic ideas

that went into the African independence explosion came out of the fifth Pan-African Congress convened by George Padmore, Kwame Nkrumah, and other Africans, some of whom would become future heads of state.

Again, in my opinion, what could have been the most important Pan-African Congress and the first to meet on African soil was the Sixth Pan-African Congress. It was the largest and most diverse of these meetings. It was unwieldy and very little was accomplished. Too many Africans from different parts of the world and from within Africa itself came with different agendas. Not much was achieved except some good and bad conversations and an unfortunate fight over ideologies. There should have been a preparatory meeting in order to clarify the terms of the Sixth Pan-African Congress. The sixth Pan-African Congress that met in Tanzania, in my opinion, was a great opportunity misunderstood and killed by selfish, petty, amateur political hacks who had no clear idea of what the concept of African unity could be.

All "Pan" efforts among African people must ultimately lead to a concept of a world union of African people, in spite of geography, religion, and culture. African people live in many lands, under many regimes and practice many religions and represent many cultures. Wherever they are on the face of this earth they must think of themselves as first and foremost an African people, no less patriotic to the nations where they live outside of Africa.

The acceptance of the African American history and the African American historian as a legitimate part of the academic community did not come easily. Slavery ended and left

its false images of black people intact. In his article, "What the Historian Owes the Negro," the noted African American historian, Dr. Benjamin Quarles, says:

The Founding Fathers, revered by historians for over a century and a half, did not conceive of the Negro as part of the body politic. Theoretically, these men found it hard to imagine a society where Negroes were of equal status to whites. Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, who was far more liberal than the run of his contemporaries, was never the less certain that "the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government."

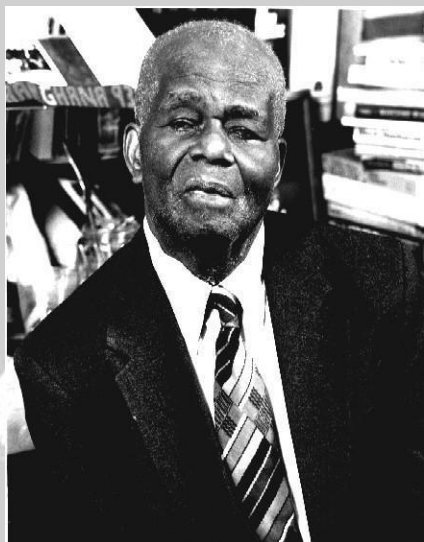
The role and importance of ethnic history is in how well it teaches a people to use their own talents, take pride in their own history and love their own memories. In order to fulfill themselves completely, in all of the honorable endeavors it is important that the teacher of history of the black race find a definition of the subject, and a frame of reference that can be understood by students who have no prior knowledge of the subject.

The following definition is paraphrased from a speech entitled, "The Negro Writer and His Relation To His Roots," by Saunders Redding, in 1960:

Heritage, in essence, is how a people have used their talent to create a history that gives them memories that they can respect, and use to command the respect of other people. The ultimate purpose of history and history teaching is to use a people's talent to develop an awareness and a pride in themselves so that they can create better instruments for living together with other people. This sense of identity is the stimulation for all of a people's honest and creative efforts. A people's relationship to their heritage is the same as the relationship of a child to its mother.

I repeat:

History is a clock that people use to tell their time of day. It is a compass that they use to find themselves on the map of human geography. It also tells them where they are, and what they are. Most importantly, an understanding of history tells a people where they still must go, and what they still must be.

Part 7 of 10**Washington, DuBois, and Woodson**Washington, DuBois, and Woodson

Africans are closely connected to the history of both North and South America. The African American's role in the social, economic and political development of the American states is an important foundation upon which to build racial understanding, especially in areas in which false generalizations and stereotypes have been developed to separate peoples rather than to unite them. Early white American historians did not accord African people anywhere a respectful place in their commentaries on the history of man. In the closing years of the nineteenth century, African American historians began to look at their people's history from their vantage point and their point of view. Dr. Benjamin Quarles observed that "as early as 1883 this desire to bring to public attention the untapped

material on the Negro prompted George Washington Williams to publish his two volume *History of The Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880*."

Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Cotton Exposition Address, in 1895, set in motion a great debate among black people about their direction and their place in the developing American social order. Some, principally Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, questioned whether black people had any future in America. The black woman, who was very much a part of this movement, answered this question in the affirmative by pouring massive energy into building new institutions, primarily schools. This nineteenth century and early twentieth century reaction to oppression by the black American intellectual community was part of the search for a definition of the status of the African in the world community.

Although Booker T. Washington's speech set off debates among people of that time, it was misunderstood then and it is misunderstood now. The reason it was misunderstood was that this speech was a speech of strategy, and was one of the most unique con-games ever played. In this speech he maneuvered to appeal to all sides. He spoke to the white South, the black South, the North and he got what he wanted and what he needed. No one really noticed what he did. One reporter from Boston who did notice reported that as blacks came down from the balcony—some of them were crying and some of them waved their hands toward where Booker T. Washington was standing. They shook their heads and said, "Oh, no, Booker, no, Booker." Some of them began

their retreat out of the South. They began the migration because they couldn't believe some of the things he had said. Yet, he had set a pace and had taken blacks out of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. We did not quite understand what he had done. The South misinterpreted the speech. They thought that he meant that he endorsed segregation and in the five year span from 1895 to 1900, a rash of Jim Crow laws came into being. That was not his intent nor what he meant.

During the twenty year span between his speech, in 1895, and his mysterious death in 1915, Booker T. Washington stood astride the life of black America in such a way that the social history of that period can be written around the life of this single man. He was, to say the least, a schizophrenic and probably much more than that. A black person in America cannot afford the luxury of just being schizophrenic. We could not get through a twenty four hour day with just two personalities. We need at least a dozen personalities so that we can hide from the people of our own race to whom we dare not tell the truth. And we move through life with our little bag of masks, and we put on different masks as we meet different people because telling the truth to these people would get us killed.

The first formally trained African American historian was [W.E.B. DuBois](#), whose doctoral dissertation, published in 1895, "The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States, 1638-1870," became the first title to be published in the Harvard Historical Studies. A few Black scholars believed that the African American had no African heritage to reclaim. W.E.B. DuBois and his followers stood in opposition to this view. At the start of the twentieth century African Americans were confronted with two schools of thought: the school of Booker T. Washington and the school of W.E.B. DuBois. In 1903 Dr. DuBois published a book of essays, *The Souls Of Black Folks*. This was a different kind of scholarship, more explanatory than argumentative. In 1905 he helped to bring the Niagara Movement into being. In 1909, the ideas of this movement helped to create the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

After being introduced to the international significance of Africa at the First Pan-African Congress in London in 1900, DuBois remained committed to the unification of Africa for the rest of his life. At the Second Pan-African Congress in Paris in 1919, Dr. DuBois emerged as the movement's world leader, the capacity in which he appealed to the League of Nations and other international organizations on behalf of African people.

In his essay, "My Mission," published in *Crisis* magazine, April, 1919, Dubois said:

I went to Paris during the time of the Peace Conference because the destinies of mankind for a hundred years to come were being settled by the big four, because they had the power through their armed forces, capital and propaganda machines to do so.

He went on to say that thirty two nations, people, and races had permanent headquarters in Paris. He felt it imperative for African people to make their presence known in Paris at this time.

The Second Pan-African Congress adopted eleven resolutions and submitted them to the Peace Conference, then meeting at Versailles. The first two resolutions applied only to Africans, calling for a Code of Laws for the international protection of Africans and for the establishment of a permanent bureau to oversee the application of that code to their political, social and economic welfare. The remaining resolutions applied to Africans and people of African descent living in countries outside the African continent. The question of the slave trade had been raised by the British at the Congress of Vienna and the specific question of the Belgian Congo had been raised on the international level, but the Second Congress marked the first time that the Africans and people of African descent themselves had raised the international issue of their condition. Referring to this Congress, Dr. DuBois said:

I went (to Paris) with the idea of calling a "Pan-African Congress" and trying to impress upon the members of the Peace Congress meeting at Versailles the importance of Africa in the future world. I was without credentials or influence, but the idea took on. I tried to get a conference with President Wilson, but only got as far as Colonel House, who was sympathetic but noncommittal.

The Pan-African Congress of 1921 adopted resolutions similar to those of the 1919 Congress, but was more specific in the proposals they presented to the new League of Nations. They called for the establishment, under the League, of an international institution for the study of African problems and asked that an international section be set up under the jurisdiction of the Labor Bureau of the League to protect African labor.

After the Pan-African Congress of 1921, Dr. DuBois went to Geneva where he met with the head of the Mandates Commission and talked with Albert Thomas, head of the International Labor Organization. Through the Haitian representative to the League, the Pan-African Congress submitted a petition that asked that a man of African descent be appointed to the Mandates Commission as soon as a vacancy occurred. The petition also asked the League to devote some of its attention to the plight of the millions of black people living in countries outside of Africa who were being discriminated against. This petition, an interesting landmark in the development of African and African American political thought, had far-reaching implications for international politics because it asserted that the race problem was international and because it maintained that an international organization had the responsibility to concern itself with the problem within particular nations.

My point here is that W.E.B. DuBois was never a narrow partisan. For most of his public life, which extended over two generations, he held an international view of the problems of his people. He was a nationalist, PanAfricanist and a socialist, and he saw no contradiction between these positions. His love for his own people gave him an appreciation of all people. He was one of the pioneers that called for a reinterpretation of the history of Africa and of African people throughout the world. He said:

African American history cannot be honestly taught without some reference to its African background and the black American's search for the meaning of that

background and its relationship to their present-day lives. The Africans who came to the United States as slaves started their attempts to reclaim their lost African heritage soon after they arrived in this country. They were searching for the lost identity that the slave system had developed. Concurrent with the black man's search for an identity in America has been his search for an identity in the world, which means, in essence, his identity as a human being with a history, before and after slavery, that can command respect.

In the fall of 1961, Dr. DuBois and his wife, Shirley Graham DuBois, took up residence in Ghana, at the invitation of the late [Kwame Nkrumah](#), then President of Ghana. DuBois died in Accra on August 27, 1963 at the age of ninety five, on the eve of the historic March on Washington. On September 9, 1963, the Board of Directors of the N.A.A.C.P. passed a resolution mourning his death and calling him "a pioneer in the struggle for human rights." The members of the Board noted that Dr. DuBois was:

The prime inspirer, philosopher and father of the Negro Protest Movement, a founder of the NAACP, an impassioned and eloquent spokesman for equal rights, a fierce and uncompromising foe of colonialism and promoter of the Pan-African Congress, and the most eminent scholar and historian of the black race in America and Africa.

The resolution further stated that:

His literary, historical and sociological contributions were so vast and all-inclusive that no serious research in the African field can be done without reference to the work of Dr. W.E.B. DuBois.

Now in the debate between W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington we started choosing sides. We started choosing sides and we haven't straightened it out until this day. We assumed that we had no choice other than to choose sides between a political/liberal education and an agricultural/industrial education: either DuBois was right or Booker T. Washington was right. We could not allow that both of them were right.

Both of them looked at the world based on how they were reared. DuBois was raised in New England, a partial aristocrat. One could be an aristocrat in New England and not have any money. Washington was a farm boy from slave parents, and he did not know his father; therefore, he looked at the world that way. Both men were practical, based on each one's vantage point in looking at his world. And we needed what both men offered. We needed it at that time and we need it now.

Booker T. Washington's program would have eventually led us to DuBois' program and DuBois' program would have eventually led us to a consideration of Washington's program. We did not have to reject either one of them. At the time when whites were not paying much attention to our education, we could have innovated to the point of creating an educational system that would have moved ahead of American education. However,

instead of leading we began to follow, and today we are still following a people who don't know where they are going.

We have not considered that the education for white people in this country is basically bad, and it is even worse for us. If we had followed Booker T. Washington's educational plan there would not be a boarded-up house in any black community. There would be black plumbers, black carpenters, blacks who own brickyards, and black technicians who would fix the houses long before they reached the point of being boarded-up.

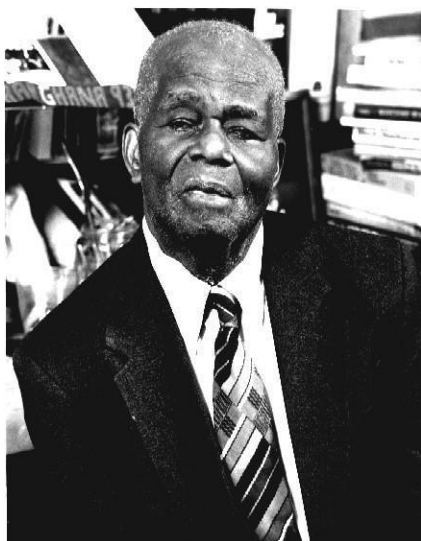
Had we followed W.E.B. DuBois' program, there would be no inept black politicians because we would have learned how to make our politicians accountable to us, or else we would remove them. We should have had a wedding between what Booker T. Washington was saying and what DuBois was saying. Instead we called Washington a traditionalist and DuBois a modernist and did not see that there was no conflict between one and the other.

It was with [Carter G. Woodson](#), another Ph.D., that African world history took a great leap forward and found a defender who could document his claims. Woodson was convinced that unless something was done to rescue the black man from history's oversight, he would become a "negligible factor in the thought of the world." Woodson believed that there was no such thing as "Negro History." He said what was called "Negro History" was only a missing segment of world history and he devoted the greater portion of his life to restoring this segment. In his own way, Carter G. Woodson answered the need of scholars of his day. After serving many years as a teacher in public schools, Woodson became convinced that the role played by his people in American history and in the history of other cultures was being so drastically ignored and misrepresented that he founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915, to conduct research into the history of the African all over the world. The next year he began publication of the Journal of Negro History, which has never missed an issue.

A chronicle of Woodson's far-reaching activities must include; the organization in 1921 of Associated Publishers, Inc., to make possible the publication and circulation of valuable books on the African American and American history that was not acceptable to most publishers; the establishment of Negro History Week in 1926; the initial subsidizing of research in black history; and the writing of many articles and books on African American and American life and history.

Part 8 of 10

The Challenge Facing the Scholar of African Descent



The Challenge Facing the Scholar of African Descent

Contrary to a misconception which still prevails, Africans were familiar with literature and art for many years before their contact with the Western World. Before the breaking-up of the social structure of the West African states of Ghana, Mali and Songhay and the internal strife and chaos that made the slave trade possible, the forefathers of the Africans who eventually became slaves in the United States, lived in a society where university life was fairly common and scholars were held in reverence. To understand fully any aspect of African American life one must realize that the African American is not without a cultural past, though he was many generations removed from it before his achievement in American literature and art commanded any appreciable

attention.

That is why African and Africana history should be taught every day, not only in the schools, but also in the home and African American History Month should be every month. We need to learn about all of the African people in the world. The idea of an education for a new reality in the African world was already old, with me, before this decade. The serious study of the plight of African people all over the world, in all ages, conditions and geographical settings, has been the main part of my life's work. It is the all consuming passion of my existence. It is something I do, just like breathing is something I do. It is a subject which, if I were to talk directly on it for more than twenty minutes, I would have to talk on it for at least a year.

To begin, let's consider the word BLACK. Black is an honorable word and I am glad to see so many people lose their fear of using it: however, black has its limitations. Black tells you how you look without telling you who you are. A more proper word for our people, African, relates us to land, history and culture.

No people can be spiritually and culturally secure until they answer to a name of their own choosing—a name that instantaneously relates that people to the past, the present, and the future. In his book, *The Name "Negro": Its Origin and Evil Use*, the Caribbean writer, Richard B. Moore, has said:

Slaves and dogs are named by their masters. Free men name themselves.

In his book Mr. Moore expresses something that is increasingly rare in the present academic environment—a conviction based on research and reason. "Human relations," he says, "cannot be peaceful, satisfactory, and happy until placed on the basis of mutual self-respect. The proper name for people, has thus become, in this period of crucial change and rapid reformation on a world scale, a vital factor in determining basic attitudes involving how, and even whether, people will continue to live together on this shrinking planet."

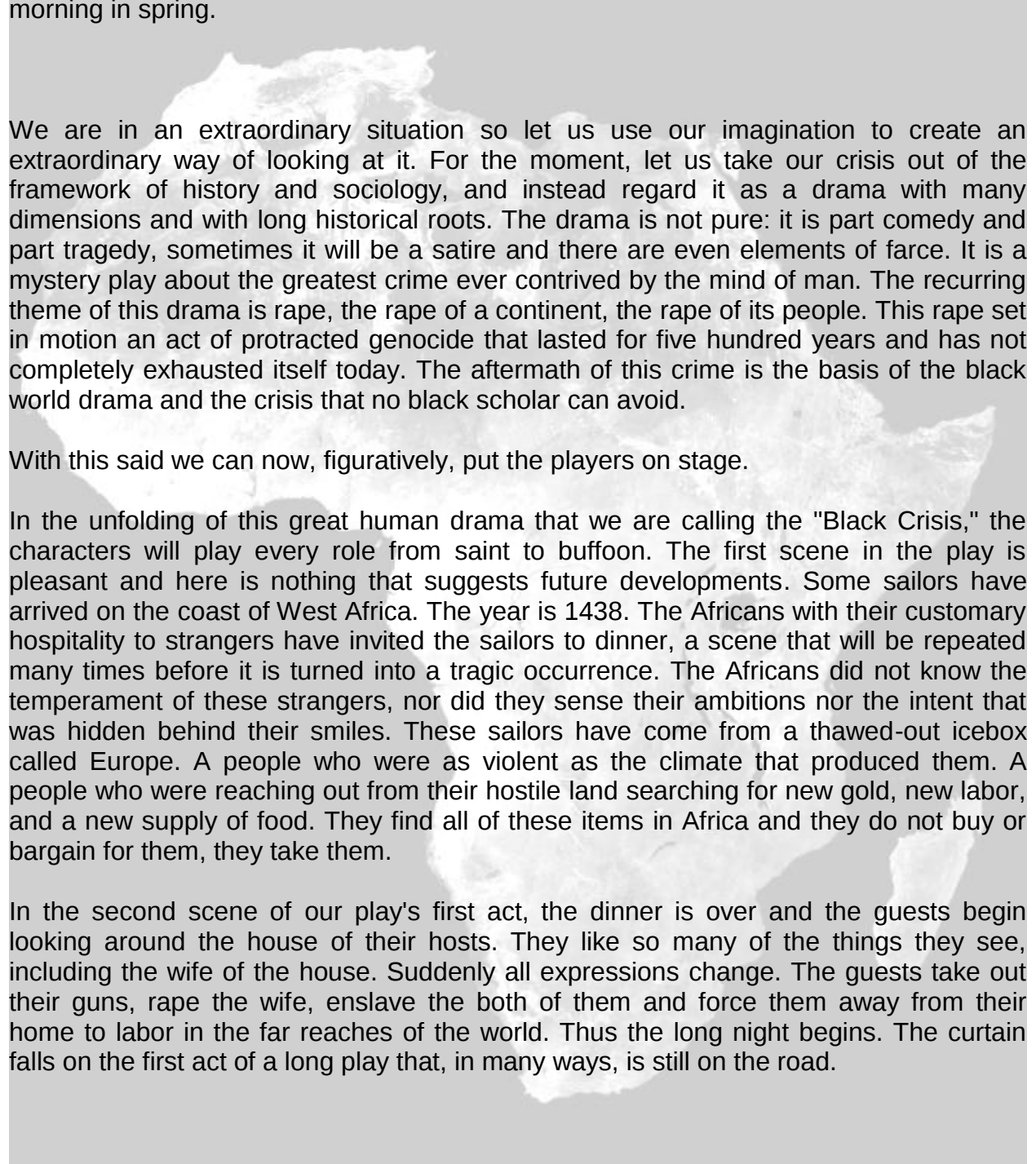
Richard B. Moore gives us much to think about in a world where Europeans and white people in general went to such great lengths to distort world history. Europeans benefited, greatly, from this distortion and it is clear that they knew more about history than they are prepared to admit. They had to know a great deal about history in order to distort it so effectively, and then use this distortion as an element of world control. They knew that history is a two-edged sword that can be used both as an instrument of liberation and a weapon of enslavement. They knew that then and they know it now that history, like a gun, is neutral; it will serve anyone who uses it effectively.

We must understand that all the world was changed to accommodate the second rise of Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Followed swiftly by the European conquest of most of mankind, this conquest was achieved by the astute use of two political instruments—the Bible and the gun. The Europeans, in addition to colonizing the world, colonized information about the world and the writing of the history of the world. They were so successful that today there is not a single book in existence with the title, "World History," that is an honest history of the world and all of its people. World history lost its broad definition and became a rationale for European conquest and control—a means for the glorification of European people at the expense of other people and nations whose civilizations were old before Europe was born.

The first European attack was on African culture. Their next move was to deny that this culture ever existed. A look at African cultures, especially in West Africa, will show us what an education for a new reality in the African world should be about. There is no way to talk about this education without looking again at the roots of world history and the interplay of the histories of various people. The scholar who knows his people's history and its relationship to the history of the world should start with the bold assertion that Africa is the basis of world history, and that African people are the mothers and fathers of mankind. Scholars the world over must be courageous enough to make this assertion and prepare themselves academically to prove it. The special role that history assigns to the scholar eludes most of us: the role is simple, therefore it is very complex. In most societies the scholar is not required to labor in the fields, to draw water, nor to bring wood for the fires. At this point you might ask what is the scholar required to do? What is his or her special mission? What is the assignment? The scholar is the clock-watcher of history and the keeper of the compass that must be used to locate his or her people on the map of human geography. The scholar will be able to tell the people where they have been and what they have been, where they are and what they are. Most importantly, the scholar should be able to prophesy and predict where his people

still must go and what his people still must be. The scholar should be able to find the special clock that tells his people their historical, cultural and political time of day.

The role of scholars to us as a people is to end part of our special tragedy because for too long, figuratively speaking, we have been telling our time by our oppressor's clock. By his clock it could be midnight in December because he is losing control of the world. We, estranged in the Western World where we are neither guest nor citizen, are re-merging with hope flowing before us like a river—by our special historical clock. It is a morning in spring.



We are in an extraordinary situation so let us use our imagination to create an extraordinary way of looking at it. For the moment, let us take our crisis out of the framework of history and sociology, and instead regard it as a drama with many dimensions and with long historical roots. The drama is not pure: it is part comedy and part tragedy, sometimes it will be a satire and there are even elements of farce. It is a mystery play about the greatest crime ever contrived by the mind of man. The recurring theme of this drama is rape, the rape of a continent, the rape of its people. This rape set in motion an act of protracted genocide that lasted for five hundred years and has not completely exhausted itself today. The aftermath of this crime is the basis of the black world drama and the crisis that no black scholar can avoid.

With this said we can now, figuratively, put the players on stage.

In the unfolding of this great human drama that we are calling the "Black Crisis," the characters will play every role from saint to buffoon. The first scene in the play is pleasant and here is nothing that suggests future developments. Some sailors have arrived on the coast of West Africa. The year is 1438. The Africans with their customary hospitality to strangers have invited the sailors to dinner, a scene that will be repeated many times before it is turned into a tragic occurrence. The Africans did not know the temperament of these strangers, nor did they sense their ambitions nor the intent that was hidden behind their smiles. These sailors have come from a thawed-out icebox called Europe. A people who were as violent as the climate that produced them. A people who were reaching out from their hostile land searching for new gold, new labor, and a new supply of food. They find all of these items in Africa and they do not buy or bargain for them, they take them.

In the second scene of our play's first act, the dinner is over and the guests begin looking around the house of their hosts. They like so many of the things they see, including the wife of the house. Suddenly all expressions change. The guests take out their guns, rape the wife, enslave the both of them and force them away from their home to labor in the far reaches of the world. Thus the long night begins. The curtain falls on the first act of a long play that, in many ways, is still on the road.

My basic point is that all black scholars in the West, and most of them in Africa, have been reacting to the consequences of this play. Their dilemma is how to interpret these events and their far-reaching tragic aftermath. Their consequences are the primary content of their literary heritage and out of this material came the slave narratives, the spirituals, and the blues.

I am talking about something that is both historical and topical, which helps to explain why we can better understand the present by looking through the lenses of the past. We need both vantage points in order to understand the present. We, as a people, each time we forget that our African-ness is our rallying cry, our window on the world, and the basis of our first allegiance, find ourselves in serious trouble. To explain this fact I must make an admission that breaks my heart, as well as it might break yours. Throughout history we have been a politically naive people. We have never made a good alliance with another people, least of all with white people. I do not mean that we have never made alliances with other people. I am saying that the alliances that we have made have not been in our favor. In the future we should enter into only those alliances that we can control.

Africans, traditionally, have been the only people who permit other people to live in their home, or country, for hundreds of years without demanding a declaration of allegiance to their home. We have always invited our future conquerors to dinner. This misplaced humanity and hospitality to strangers is at once the strongest and the weakest aspect of our African way of life. It is the strongest because it is the basis of African humanity; it is the weakest because all too many strangers have come into Africa and have taken advantage of Africa's generosity. People who think they can trust every stranger who enters their home are politically naive. This is an aspect of the African world situation which we have not studied or fully acknowledged and it will remain so as long as we ignore it.

We need to take a global view of African people in our attempt to understand how we relate to other people. This will be the culmination of a long intellectual struggle that started in the first half of the nineteenth century. The need to analyze and interpret the place where African people in world history grew more critical during the first two decades of this century. Black Americans had entered the twentieth century searching for a new direction, politically, culturally and institutionally, a new definition and an ideology. New scholars were emerging who began to interpret the history and struggles of African people from an international point of view. This atmosphere nurtured new men and movements which gave black scholarship the real test of its existence. To establish an education for a new reality in the African world without an ideology would be merely a recitation of days, places, personalities and events, without an understanding of their place in the past, the present and their effect on the reshaping of the future.

For our liberation we should draw on the intellectual heritage of the whole world, beginning, of course, with our own intellectual heritage. If our people are cold, we

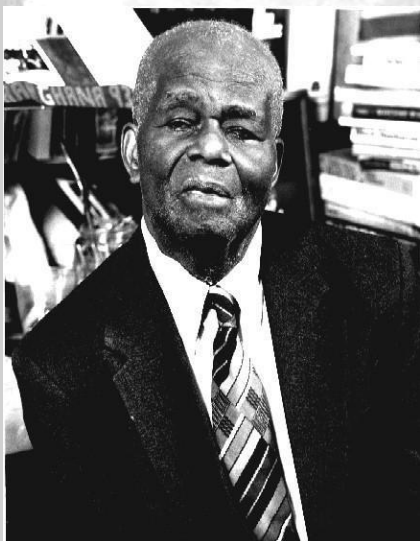
should invade hell and borrow fire from the devil, and we will do this without becoming the devil's disciples. We should properly read the signs of history and remember:

What we do for ourselves depends on what we know of ourselves and what we accept about ourselves.

This is what the struggle in education for a new reality in the African world is all about. An education for a new reality in the African world must be holistic. Africans must be educated to know, down to the marrow of their bones, that they must be the owners of Africa and must be responsible for the management of every part of Africa. While there are Africans in most parts of the world, the historical, political and cultural heart-beat of all Africans is in Africa itself.

Part 9 of 10

Education Is Power



Education for a New Reality in the African World

Recently some of the new leaders of African nations are beginning to sell their gold mines to Europeans, land to Europeans and to make concessions within Africa that violate the traditional values of African people. What these European-minded Africans fail to remember is that by custom and culture, land in African can neither be bought nor sold because land has been traditionally seen as the collective property of the whole people and no leader has the right to sell this birthright and the birthright of generations of Africans still to come because land is essential to nationhood. For more information about the land problem in Africa I suggest you read, *The Truth About the West African Land*

Problem, by Casely Hayford, and *Facing Mt. Kenya and Kenya, Land of Conflict* by Jomo Kenyatta.

Education for a new reality in the African world must be an education that enables the African to handle all of the wealth producing resources of Africa. An education that enables the African to manage and market these resources and an education that enables him/her to prepare the generations still to come to do the same thing. A large number of African children should be chosen at birth and trained toward these ends and all education should be for the total sovereignty of African people. There is nothing in African traditional values that prohibits modernism, upward mobility, or the use of

science and technology. Africans must realize that they live in a modern technical world and that there are lessons we can draw from our ancient societies to guide us. Africa has to move with the age in which it finds itself in order to survive.

What I am proposing here is a holy order of commitment. In the future we can not leave land and nation management to chance. What I am alluding to here is the establishment of an international priesthood of liberation and an institute to maintain that priesthood. If we are to go back to nationhood and be safe and secure, we must understand that a nation must be a cultural, political and economic container of the national and international aspirations of a people. The commitment to maintain the nation and secure it against all enemies, both foreign and domestic, must be part of everyone's mission, not something left solely to politicians. Africans the world over must stop playing games about who is an African. Everyone in Africa who cannot be addressed as an African is either an invader or a descendant of an invader. It is time for the African to ask the guests in their house the question: What is your mission in my house? and—Do you have any loyalty or commitment to the preservation of my house, as I conceive it to be? Africans must be bold enough to let the non-African in Africa know that, "I will share power with you in Africa to the extent that you are willing to share power with me in Europe. You demand and get the prevailing power in your countries and I have every right to demand and get the prevailing power in my country." Africans should demand and get Africa as African-ruled as France is French-ruled and England is English-ruled. Too many times Africans are expected to share power with others who have no intention of sharing power with them. In educating Africans to realistically face the world of the immediate tomorrow, I am referring to the essential selfishness of survival.

My subject, Education for a New Reality in the African World, was not casually chosen. I have spoken and written on this subject or some aspect of it many times over the years. I have exhausted my arguments in favor of the subject without losing my passion for the subject. And yet I still have not made everyone understand the importance of education; education is power. When education is properly done, education opens the door to power. A true education has one purpose, and one purpose alone: to train the student to be a handler of power. One of the things that we fail to understand is that our oppressor cannot afford to educate us to handle power. We live in a society where, if we were properly educated, we would not ask for power. We would take power. We will have to stop answering to names that our mothers and fathers did not give us. We will have to stop answering to names of which we are not.

The real crisis facing black educators began a long time ago with things we did not understand. I think back to reading about a scene of an African being forced on a slave ship, and he reaches back and puts a handful of African dirt in his mouth. I think that African understood more about education than most of us. He understood the basis of nation—land. Until we understand the land basis of education and the nation basis of education, we will miss the point. Where did we go wrong and when did we stop being innovators and became imitators?

In the nineteenth century we began to be "those things most unlike ourselves." When we had the golden opportunity to set a new tone in education, we tried to be like our oppressor instead of setting a new basis for education. Professor Ivan Van Sertima says that European expansion into the broader world and European colonization of history have locked us into a "five hundred year room" of history. A room wherein African people and their contributions to the world were removed from history. The basis of education for a new reality is to pull us out of this five hundred year room. We have to understand what was wrong with our education and examine the nineteenth century in the African world. The nineteenth century might have been the greatest century in the whole of the African world. This might be the century that we have to go back and examine in order to survive in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

We produced the finest minds that we have produced since the decline of Egypt and Nile Valley Civilization in the nineteenth century. We produced the rebels, the activist mentality, the realists in the nineteenth century. This is the century of Frederick Douglass and Martin Delaney. This is the century of the great ministers, who tower over [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#) and were more realistic than Martin Luther King, Jr. Taking nothing from Dr. King, this is the century of Henry Highland Garnett whose motto was "Resistance, Resistance, Resistance." This is the century of a search for Africa again. This is the century of the great black women: Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman. We have forgotten that century, but we will not orient ourselves in the twentieth century until we go back to that century, and I was just talking about what was happening in the United States.

When we look at the Caribbean Islands, this is a century of physical resistance. Looking at South America, especially Brazil, Africans brought into being two black nations. African captives were able to by-pass the auction block, escape into the hinterlands and form African nations. One of these nations, Palmares lasted for one hundred and ten years. The other one, Bahia, lasted almost as long. During this century African cultural continuity produced the most successful slave revolts in the history of the world. The best known revolts were those in Jamaica and in Haiti. Jamaica fought longer and harder than Haiti, but Haiti was able to bring off an independent state and Jamaica could not, and we wonder why.

Haiti fought over a shorter period with a greater degree of consistency, and hit the French at a strategic time—when Napoleon was involved with other campaigns in Europe. They were successful in their revolt. When the Jamaicans revolted, their revolts were put down and too much time elapsed between revolts, giving the British time to destabilize them. After each defeat the Jamaicans had to remount each revolution from scratch. The time lapse did not give them the facility to bring forth a nation, while the total of the Haitian revolutions (there were more than one) happened over a twenty year period.

The physical resistance in the Caribbean Islands challenged Europe and changed the geography of this hemisphere. Because of the challenge of the Caribbean Islands—Toussaint L'Ouverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Christophe—Napoleon had to

sell the Louisiana Territory. These Caribbean revolutions brought into being the stimulation for the massive slave revolts in the United States.

While we are looking at the Caribbean, let's look at the Caribbean mind and its contribution to the stimulation of black social forms in the United States. We need to understand that the Caribbean mind never functioned well at home. Once the Caribbean mind begins functioning well it is driven away from home. The Caribbean mind has a way of producing seed that does not grow in the soil of the Caribbean. The soil was fertile in the United States and the best of these minds came here. It started with Prince Hall. Robert Campbell would come here. He would travel with Martin Delaney to Africa and write *A Search for a Place*. John B. Russwurm would edit *Freedom's Journal*. Peter Ogden was one of the founders of Odd Fellows. Prince Hall would found the Masons. H. Sylvester Williams had tried to establish a Pan-African League in Trinidad. It failed. Trinidadians did not pay any attention to it. The same thing happened when [Marcus Garvey](#) started his Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League in Jamaica. He could not get it off the ground. The soil would not take the seed. The greatest contribution to the formal idea of Pan-Africanism was made by three Trinidadians: H. Sylvester Williams, C.L.R. James, and George Padmore. Why couldn't these minds function at home? You can trace the history of these minds for two hundred years all the way up to Marcus Garvey, including those that returned home and were killed. None of them were accepted at home.

The greatest and clearest of the minds of the nineteenth century was Edward Wilmot Blyden. What he said about education in his famous inaugural address at Liberia College, in 1881, said more about education over one hundred years ago than we are saying right now. He said:

We will have to work for many years to come. Not only without the popular support that we must have, but with inadequate resources.

...We strive to be those things most unlike ourselves. No matter what talent we have, we feed grist into other people's mills and, of course, nothing comes out except what has been put in. And that then is our great sorrow.

This was said in 1881, over one hundred years ago, and we are still doing it. Edward Wilmot Blyden was one of the finest voices of the nineteenth century. He was not only ahead of his time, he is ahead of this time.

Let's look at Africa in the nineteenth century. This is the century of the massive anti-colonial revolts. This is the century when the African world faced reality as it had never faced reality before. In the first half of the century, the Zulu Wars in Southern Africa had already started. The Ashanti Wars in Ghana had already started. The Islamic Wars in the Sudan had already started. The Maji Maji Wars in Tanganyika and neighboring

territories, and the Riff Wars in North Africa had already started. And the wars in Nigeria led by Ousmane Dan Fodio had already started.

The physical confrontation diminished as the slave trade turned into Colonialism (another form of slavery) and the Africans soon realized that missionary efforts were also a form of slavery. The Europeans began to take away the African energies and began to destroy the African images of god. One of the ways to continue to enslave a people is, after removing one set of chains from their body, to place another set of chains on their mind. Not only make them change their religion but make them abandon their religion. Make them change their dress, their tastes, their music, their food, and when this is done, you don't need any prison walls to confine these people. The prison walls inside their mind will be more binding than any prison walls you can construct.

Once we face the reality of the imprisonment of the African mind in the nineteenth century, we will face up to what was happening to that mind. We will look at the debates between blacks and blacks and look at the blacks going to Liberia to "Christianize" their "heathen" brothers. Read Alexander Crummell's work. Alexander Crummell was a great black missionary. But Alexander Crummell was a missionary with the mentality of a white missionary. He was going to Africa to spread Christianity in a continent where every element that originally went into the making of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism began. Every element that went into these three religions had long been in practice on the African continent.

Once we understand the nature of our oppressor's religious oppression, we must look at the mentality of our respective oppressors. The oppressor in the United States has taught us to face reality better than any of the others. The oppressors in the Caribbean area and in South America gave their black population the illusion that one day they would be allowed to join the club. The oppressor in the United States has taught us explicitly that we will never join the club. Even with what we like to call integration, another fakery, they still let us know that if we manage to get into the club, we will never be accepted.

In the physical integration in the Caribbean Islands and in South America, if you are almost white a special place is made for you in society. You are not allowed in the house, but you would be allowed in a designated area close to the house. In the United States, the crudest of oppressors say, if you've got one drop of one drop you will be placed with the blackest of blacks and at one word, all of you will be placed in the same sack. Although the females with the one drop had some advantage in the domestic job market and the husband market, and another market which I will not mention, no place was made for them in their father's house. And this is reality.

In my research for this paper, I re-read a dissertation on religion written by an African attending Syracuse University. His dissertation detailed why African religions never became world religions. He said they had no pews, no collection plates, no temples, no missionaries, everything was free. He asked the question: How can such a religion become a world religion? Nobody was exploiting anybody. Priests were free. The

community paid the priest so they did not have to pass the hat. The community brings the priest his food and makes his clothes. He pointed out that all of the elements that we call Christianity came out of Africa. All of the symbols of Christianity came out of Africa. He explained that when the people from Israel came into Africa, they had no clear religion, no law and no language, when they left they had all three. His dissertation was not well received by Syracuse University and he was thrown out, in 1933.

I would like to approach my conclusion with quotations from great African American women poets because in the great civilizations of Africa, long before we knew Europeans existed, women were revered, were treated equally and moved freely through the society and played all kinds of roles. The first deity in history was seen as a female goddess. The first woman to ride at the head of an army was an ancient Africa woman. The first woman to challenge the foreigner challenged Octavius, who later became Caesar Augustus. Another African woman challenged Alexander of Macedonia.

In her poetry, Mari Evans has said that part of the immediate solution to education is to "speak the truth to the people." With this she implies that if you give people the light, they will find their way.

In her early poetry, Pauli Murray, now The Reverend Dr. Pauli Murray, speaking of freedom, in her *Dark Testament*, says:

Freedom is a thing like amber wine
that lures man down a path of skulls.

For they killed the dreamer but not the dream
the dream is always the same.
The dream is about freedom.

Professor Carolyn Fowler of Atlanta University, in speaking of the need to bring African people back together again, said:

We need to look at each other more. We need to get acquainted with each other's personality. We need to remove the strangeness that has grown up between us across all the seas and all the centuries.

Margaret Walker challenges us to take action in her classic poem, *For My People*. She called for us to:

Let the new earth begin.
Let a new race of men rise and take control.

We will accept her challenge and my answer to her will be, Sister Margaret, we are people of vision and we see tomorrow, not as a male-dominated tomorrow, but as a collective tomorrow with males and females functioning as equals. We will say to her: We have heard the martial music. We have heard the trumpet call. We accept the

challenge. We are the new men who, with our women at our side as equal partners in this enterprise, are prepared to take charge.

As we enter the twenty-first century there will be over one billion African people on the face of the earth. Properly counted, the Africans in the United States, the 1990 census says, are at 30,000,000, and the census takers missed over twenty percent of us. In the Caribbean there are 60,000,000 admitted people of African descent. In Asia there are millions who are African, whether they know it or not, and on the islands of the Pacific that are several more million who are yet to consider their African ancestry. The population of Africa was last fixed at over 700,000,000 and continues to grow.

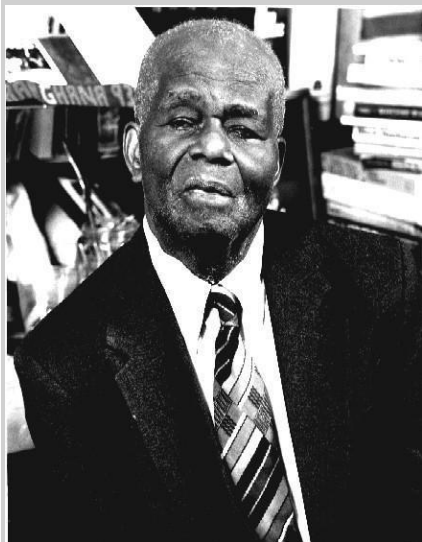
These are staggering figures. Our study of history has taught us that we were yesterday's people, and by our sheer numbers we will be tomorrow's people too. With this understanding of our new importance we can change the world, if first we change ourselves by educating ourselves for this new reality. When we count one billion of this earth there will be very few people who we will need as allies. The main allies that we will need we will be able to find among ourselves. We will be the only people who will have a continent for themselves. We will not be an oppressed people and we will not be an oppressor of any people. We will not need to exploit or take advantage of other people. We could bring to the world a new humanity and build a new age of man. This might be our mission, it might be the greatest legacy that we can leave for mankind.

Part 10 of 10

Conclusion

Struggle is the Highest Form of Education

Conclusion



According to the statement above African people should be the most educated people in the world. For over three thousand years African people have been struggling against one invader after the other; for at least two thousand of these years the invader came from Western Asia. This period of oppression abated for a few hundred years and began again with the rise of Rome and Greece and continued in a different form with the rise of Islam and the Arab slave trade. I maintain that if we had learned the right lessons from our invaders and from our oppressors we might have become the world's greatest realists and the world's most astute educators. Unfortunately we have not learned the needed lessons, mainly because we have not invested the time to learn our history. At the time in our lives when

we were being prepared against our will to lose our freedom, we were lacking in a proper education, so unsuspecting and politically naive.

Although I am an educator, and have only recently earned a doctorate, most of my education has been informal. The most meaningful survival skills I have learned were learned outside of schools, although the schools, when I could get to them, gave me a formal structure. I think the main thing that schools did for me, in my youth, was not so much to educate me, but to package the loose education I had picked up along the way and give me some indication as to how to use it more effectively. If that is all schools achieve, that's a major achievement, and the schools need not feel negated in their effectiveness. If all schools do is to take what you learn from life and convert it into an instrument for living a more meaningful life in relationship to yourself and other people they have much to congratulate themselves for because we are not nations unto ourselves. Part of what a good education does is to teach us to be better instruments of living together and accepting our interdependence—accepting how much we need from others and how much other people need from us.

I think this point was rather clear in the affairs of man until the introduction of hard currency and the gradual disappearance of barter as trade. When you had to make someone else's shoes, and he had to furnish bread for someone, and he in turn had to depend upon someone to make the quilt for his bed, this interdependence of people upon other people, based on what each had to offer, made for not only a better life for all, by virtue of this dependence, but it made for a better human existence because man understood the particular contribution of every man and valued it in the overall society. What we lost of the old way of life and what we long for, while not acknowledging that that is what we long for, has made our lives too complicated. We need to make things a little less complicated. With our machines and computers we have made too many day-to-day things complicated and we have over-packaged education to the point where we cannot understand the package.

Education in its formal beginning started long before the first school was built. People become educated by living in and responding to the world around them. In that same way they create their culture. Therefore, there can be no such thing as a culturally deprived human being or an uneducated human being. People in power create rules, standards, and institutions to accommodate their power and what they call their culture and their way of life. This creation is collectively called education.

To the African American, struggle has been the highest form of education, because it is through struggle that he prepares himself to face reality. Lost in his attempt to escape his reality, he goes into fantasy in order to save his sanity. We know what reality is and where reality is. And if we cried all the times we needed to cry, we would be crying all the time. If we looked at our situation, straight in the face, for what it really is, the tragedy would have driven us stark raving mad.

Our Dilemma: The Dream Was Not Dreamed For Us

We are America's contradiction. We are a free citizen in a democracy, and yet the sores of racism, inherited from slavery, are still with us and lingering, in the black communities, especially the black urban communities. Black urban communities are the servants' quarters that were created because after the servants had served the master the latter did not want to look at them until he wished to be served again. These communities are old in America. The early freed blacks and escaped slaves lived, in most cases, in the first black urban communities. When servants were educated at all they were educated to serve and not to share power. This is the basic dilemma in black education. Black people were not brought to this country to be given education, citizenship or democracy. They were brought here to serve, to labor and to obey. When the American promise was made originally, it was not meant for us. When the American dream was dreamed originally, it was not dreamed for us. And yet we, the pathological American patriots, have never been able to accept this. And when they said, "Liberty and justice for all," we ran to the place where the "all" was being given out, only to discover that we were not part of that "all." And when they draw the picture of the "all," we discover again to our heartbreak that we are not in the picture.

I think our misunderstanding of America is a misunderstanding of its design. If we could understand its design we would understand its education and its miseducation. To understand its design we must go back to its roots and look at the religion of each one of its founding fathers. Go back and look at the property holdings of each of these founding fathers and you will understand what is so very apparent every day, namely, that this country was designed for free, white, protestant males, preferably those who own property and agree with the prevailing political status quo. Everyone else in America is second to that group, although some people choose to dream otherwise. This country was founded on a particular pecking order with the protestant male property owners at the top of the pecking order. I draw the following example from my sharecropper's background. The rooster in the conglomerate of chickens is the king, and when he gets bored he pecks at one of the hens. In turn the hen, by whatever motivation propels hens, pecks at a smaller hen until it gets down to the smallest chick. The smallest chick does not peck back because he is the end of the pecking order. In the pecking order of power in America, black people stand at the end of the pecking order. What disturbs America now is that there is a revolt at the end of the pecking order. The people in between, especially the white ethnic minorities are in a panic, because if we move from the bottom—who is going to take that last peck without pecking back?

What we have to do in America is to end the whole system of the pecking order and to do this we will have to deal with the white, protestant, male dominated society in order to end this system and bring about a semblance of democracy which could ultimately lead to true democracy. When this happens black people will be able to go where the "all" is given out and get their share of the "all," and they will be able to look at the picture of the "all" and see themselves. Until this happens this country is unworthy of the name Christian and unworthy of the label Democracy.

Another contradiction in America for us is the contradiction in education. We are seen as powerless people and powerful people never educate powerless people in how to take power from them. When education is given to powerless people, the main function of that education is to control them. And this is the tragedy of education for the blacks and for the education of the poor in this country. One can be formally educated and still be a fool where he does not know how to handle himself vis-à-vis the power that controls him.

We need to re-cast education in its entirety. A child going to school needs to be taught how to live in the world that he lives in and how to change that world when it is needed. Somebody needs to take a child's coat or shirt and tell him what process cloth has to go through chemically and scientifically from the field to the shirt, and how one can take a piece of cotton and through different processes turn it into a napkin, a sheet, a towel, and mixed with another kind of fabric into a coat.

We need to sit a child down before his class so that the entire class can see him and be educated by the lesson. We start with his shoes, explaining that Jan Matzeliger, a black man, invented the lathe that revolutionized shoemaking in America, and that the process of leather tanning was old among us before Europe was born, and that the famous Moroccan leather craved by the kings of Europe did not come from Morocco at all, but came from the same place it still comes from, Northern Nigeria. And that the tanning process in Morocco was in the hands of African craftsmen who made the gloves and the saddles for the horses of the kings. And when we are through with his shoes, we can deal with his cotton socks. He must learn that Eli Whitney did not really invent the cotton gin but tipped the balance laid out by an illiterate slave and developed it into the cotton gin, and then we can deal with cotton itself and the relationship of blacks in America to cotton.

We could ask him how he arrived at school that day. He would tell us that he walked through the streets. We could tell him the contributions of blacks to road building, long before Europe had its first road. We could mention that the stoplight was a black invention. What we need to do is draw from day-to-day knowledge to teach our children that all history is a current event and that nothing man ever does in the world ever leaves the world, and the first man that sneezed is still influencing the atmosphere, and that all things are here for all time to come, and that if you extract from America the contributions of blacks to this society, the American society would come to a halt.

We could tell this child how the expression, "The real McCoy" developed in our society. The coupling that goes into holding trains together, and the lubrication system that revolutionized American industry was invented by Elijah McCoy, a black man. Elijah McCoy invented so many things and white inventors stole so much from him that when they went to the patent office to register a lubrication system, he was asked, "Did you steal this directly from McCoy, or is this the real McCoy?"

By the things that touch the young child's life every day we can try to show him that there moves the genius of his people. The electrical system between the trains was

invented by a black man. The very fluorescent light in our room was invented by Louis Latimer who assisted Edison in more ways than Edison cared to admit. Edison's light bulb kept going out until Louis Latimer came up with the filament that made the light burn and bum and bum. This same Louis Latimer drew up the plans for the telephone and he did one other thing that I wish he had not done, he improved the old Gatlin gun which became the forerunner of the rapid-fire machine gun. This same Gatlin gun in the hands of the British, helped to build the British Empire.

In talking about education and struggle, I have been alluding to street education versus formal education and how to communicate with the child whose education is more on the street than in the classroom. My point here is that the institutions of the powerful are limited when it comes to educating powerless people, no matter what the purpose of those institutions happens to be. The one thing powerful people cannot afford to say to powerless people is, "We were wrong." They cannot afford to make this admission without giving the impression that they are unworthy of handling the power that they have. They must always give the illusion of forever being right no matter how disastrous this illusion might turn out to be.

In talking about struggle and formal education we must start with the New England states. At the turn of the century newly freed blacks produced leaders like Frederick Douglass, and strong, black radical ministers who established the first black newspapers, the first labor organizations and the first independent black churches. Now the white missionaries from the North were assisting in black education. Something happened that was very unique in American history and it is unfortunate that this is now forgotten. The first large group of white women who went to school were educated in the New England states. The New England man, a high school graduate if he was that, a good craftsman, a good manager of a factory, but a man not too intellectually endowed, did not know what to do with this college-bred woman. They surely were not going to marry them. In fact, they acted as though they were afraid of them. Large numbers of these women were sent to the south to teach in the newly established schools for blacks. They were called New England schoolmarms, and made a major contribution to black education at a time when we had only a small number of trained black teachers.

Although we have to be thankful for their presence, some of their teaching proved disastrous. Some of these teachers came from New England finishing schools and began to train the black girls accordingly. They began to train black children from farm communities, where they did not have enough forks to go around, how to set a table for a banquet, when they would never have a banquet. If these New England women knew what we did have, like tent meetings, collective eating, mass church picnics in a setting where everything was finger food and no forks were needed, perhaps they could have adopted a more realistic approach to educating the children. They began to teach our girls what gloves to wear with what gown, and our girls often did not own gowns. This was a waste, as all improper education is a waste. One of the notable subjects they taught were Latin and Greek. Their best contribution to our education was the training of black teachers in the structure, design and methodology of teaching the English

language. Soon after Reconstruction the southern man must have gotten used to them. He no longer seemed to panic over them, although he remained in awe of them, and eventually began to marry them. Many of these women remained in the South and became Southerners. Some of them returned to New England to live out the last of their days. In the turbulent period of the Reconstruction and its aftermath, when black colleges and new black institutions were established, the schoolmarmes were either marrying Southerners or going back to New England, and there was a terrible struggle to keep alive these institutions without their support.

Early in the twentieth century black institutions were still in trouble and vying for a new kind of education and only partly winning the fight. The racially motivated raids in the South and the struggle against these raids caused blacks to migrate from the South in increasing numbers. They came to communities like Harlem, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago looking for a new way of life, a new home for themselves and new opportunities for their children. They came looking for something better than what they left behind only to discover that they were to meet new troubles in these places that had to be dealt with in different ways.

We arrived at this present point in our history again facing change. We are increasingly facing a world that will be run, in the main, by science, technology and the ideology that will maintain these forces. Education for the African world of tomorrow must first and foremost take this fact into consideration. When our youth are properly trained to face this reality there should not be a single child, male or female, in the African world, over the age of ten, without a basic knowledge of the computer, some sciences and the accompanying technology. Great emphasis needs to be placed on ending the dependency on others which started during slavery. We must, increasingly depend on ourselves and exchange goods and services between ourselves and others. We should look realistically at the state of the world and build the kind of state that can be the container for our culture, our hopes, our aspirations and the land base of our true sovereignty. All education should be education to assume responsibility

I would like to close with a statement John O. Killens made about [Malcolm X](#). In order to make his statement applicable to all African people I will paraphrase it a little. Mr. Killens said, in effect, We are DEDICATED and COMMITTED African patriots, with DIGNITY as our country, MANHOOD as our government, and FREEDOM as our land.

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